


# **ATWATER GENERAL PLAN 1992 - 2012**



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2025 with funding from  
State of California and California State Library

<https://archive.org/details/C124907333>

93 00492

# **ATWATER GENERAL PLAN 1992 - 2012**

**LAND USE, CIRCULATION & OPEN SPACE/CONSERVATION ELEMENTS**

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENTAL  
STUDIES LIBRARY

MAR 22 1993

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

**APPROVED BY ATWATER PLANNING COMMISSION**

**RESOLUTION # PC 363-92**

**JULY 1, 1992**


**APPROVED BY ATWATER CITY COUNCIL**

**RESOLUTION # 1030-92**

**AUGUST 10, 1992**







**MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS...they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably will not be realized,**

**MAKE BIG PLANS...aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die,**

**but long after we are gone will be a living thing asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.**

DANIEL BURNHAM











## **FOREWORD**

By 1990, the Atwater City Council realized that the City was quickly running out of expansion area. While the General Plan adopted in 1981 was intended to guide future development through 2001, the urbanization which had occurred during the 1980s made the geographic parameter established by the 1981 document obsolete.

The primary focus of the General Plan update, initiated in October 1990, has been to reevaluate Land Use policies, consider a circulation system capable of handling increased growth, and to seek viable geographic direction for urban growth.

This General Plan Update, therefore, only addresses amendments to the Land Use, Circulation, and Open Space/Conservation Elements. The Housing Element, amended in 1986, is currently under review. A revised Housing Element is anticipated to be approved independently of this document by late summer, 1992. The Noise, Safety, Seismic Safety, and Scenic Highways Elements of the 1981 General Plan will remain intact for the time being.

### **CITY COUNCIL**

Mayor Joe Frontella

Kenneth DeVoe, Mayor Pro Tem

Gregory R. Olzack

George Winningham

Scott Weimer

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Robert S. Armstrong Jr., Chairman

Ed Abercrombie, Vice Chairman

Alan Jenkins

Kevin Kalebjian

Carolyn Meyer (Resigned)

Van Vanderzyde





## GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(Joseph D. MacDonald, Chairman)

Gunnar Berquist	Tom Dunbar	Marlin Nachtigal
Dorothy Bizzini	Doris Snapp	Michael G. Nelson
Vicki Blass	William E. Effinger, Jr.	Mary Vaughn
Ted Brodalski	Carol Joan Faul	Genevieve Ousley
Art Browner	Maria Friesen	Aaron Page
Dennis Cardoza	Alice Gilbertson	Richard D. Rogers
Manuel Cardoza	G.R. (Julie) Kamesch	Allen Sietsema II
Frank Chaves	John Kaufman	Deborah Snow
Nathalie Compton	Debra McGarry	Malcom W. Tracy
Ron Denault	Don McCoon	Steven P. Welch
E. Eileen Duddy, CPA	Samuel Martin	David J. Wickenhauser



# ATWATER GENERAL PLAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	
	General . . . . .	1
	Exclusions . . . . .	1
	Background . . . . .	1
	City History . . . . .	1
2.	Land Use	
	Population . . . . .	6
	Social & Economic Factors . . . . .	6
	Urban Expansion . . . . .	7
	Sphere of Influence . . . . .	7
	Land Use . . . . .	13
	Land Use Goals & Policies . . . . .	31
3.	Circulation	
	Transportation/Circulation . . . . .	33
	Road Network . . . . .	33
	Alternative Transportation Modes . . . . .	40
	Other Infrastructure . . . . .	43
	Circulation Goals & Policies . . . . .	45
4.	Open Space/Conservation	
	Topography . . . . .	46
	Geology & Seismicity . . . . .	46
	Soils . . . . .	46
	Ag Land . . . . .	47
	Climate & Air Quality . . . . .	47
	Surface water . . . . .	49
	Drainage & Flooding . . . . .	49
	Water Quality . . . . .	50
	Vegetation & Wildlife . . . . .	51
	Recreation & Parks . . . . .	52
	Scenic Resources . . . . .	54
	Cultural & Historic Resources . . . . .	54
	Open Space/Conservation Goals & Policies . . . . .	55
5.	Goals & Policies . . . . .	56
6.	Phased Development . . . . .	64
	Appendix	





## TABLES

1.	City of Atwater - General Plan Elements . . . . .	3
2.	Population Forecasts . . . . .	6
3.	Atwater Expansion . . . . .	10
4.	Existing and Proposed Land Use Acreage Comparison . . . . .	14
5.	Residential Building Population Projections . . . . .	19
6.	Land Use Projections . . . . .	20
7.	Phased Development Land Areas . . . . .	66

## FIGURES

1.	City of Atwater Vicinity Map . . . . .	4
2.	Theoretical Relationship between City's Planning Area and Sphere of Influence . . . . .	8
3.	Planning Area & Urban Expansion Area . . . . .	9
4.	Population Distribution . . . . .	12
5.	Existing Land Use Map . . . . .	15
6.	Future Land Use Plan . . . . .	16
7.	Future Land Use Plan - Central Area . . . . .	17
8.	Urban Land Use 1992 . . . . .	18
9.	Average Daily Traffic . . . . .	35
10.	Circulation Plan - Roadways and Trails . . . . .	36
11.	Typical Roadway Cross Sections . . . . .	37
12.	Parkway Diagram . . . . .	38
13.	Caltrans Freeway Plan . . . . .	39
14.	Circulation Plan - Pedestrian and Bicycle . . . . .	42
15.	Park/Open Space Plan . . . . .	53
16.	Phased Development Policy Map . . . . .	65



# **1. INTRODUCTION**



**ATWATER GENERAL PLAN**

---



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### GENERAL

This chapter serves as a descriptive document to provide the setting for the City of Atwater, California. Its focus is to provide a general introduction to the City and its physical, historical, social and cultural character. This document is intended to serve as an established database for general information.

### EXCLUSIONS

Certain issues which are often components of planning and environmental review documents have been excluded from this chapter due to their inapplicability to the City of Atwater and its surrounding environs. These topics specifically include:

- o Forest Resources and Conservation
- o Coastal Resources and Preservation
- o Harbors or Ports
- o Fisheries
- o Mineral Resources
- o Geothermal Resources

### BACKGROUND

The City of Atwater, California is located in northeastern Merced County on the eastern portion of the San Joaquin Valley bisected by State Highway 99. Atwater is a growing community whose economy has been dominated by agriculture and the nearby Castle Air Force Base (AFB). The smaller, unincorporated community of Winton lies immediately north of the City. Merced, the County seat, lies seven miles southeast.

The Atwater planning area is generally defined by Sultana Drive in the west, Highway 140 in the south, Oakdale Road and the Merced River in the north, and Highway 59 in the east (see Figure 1). This general planning area measures 93 square miles (59,800 acres) and encompasses the entire city limits of Atwater, Castle AFB, the communities of Winton, Cressey, and Franklin-Beachwood, and the project area for the planned Castle Reservoir. The majority of this area consists of agricultural lands.

### CITY HISTORY

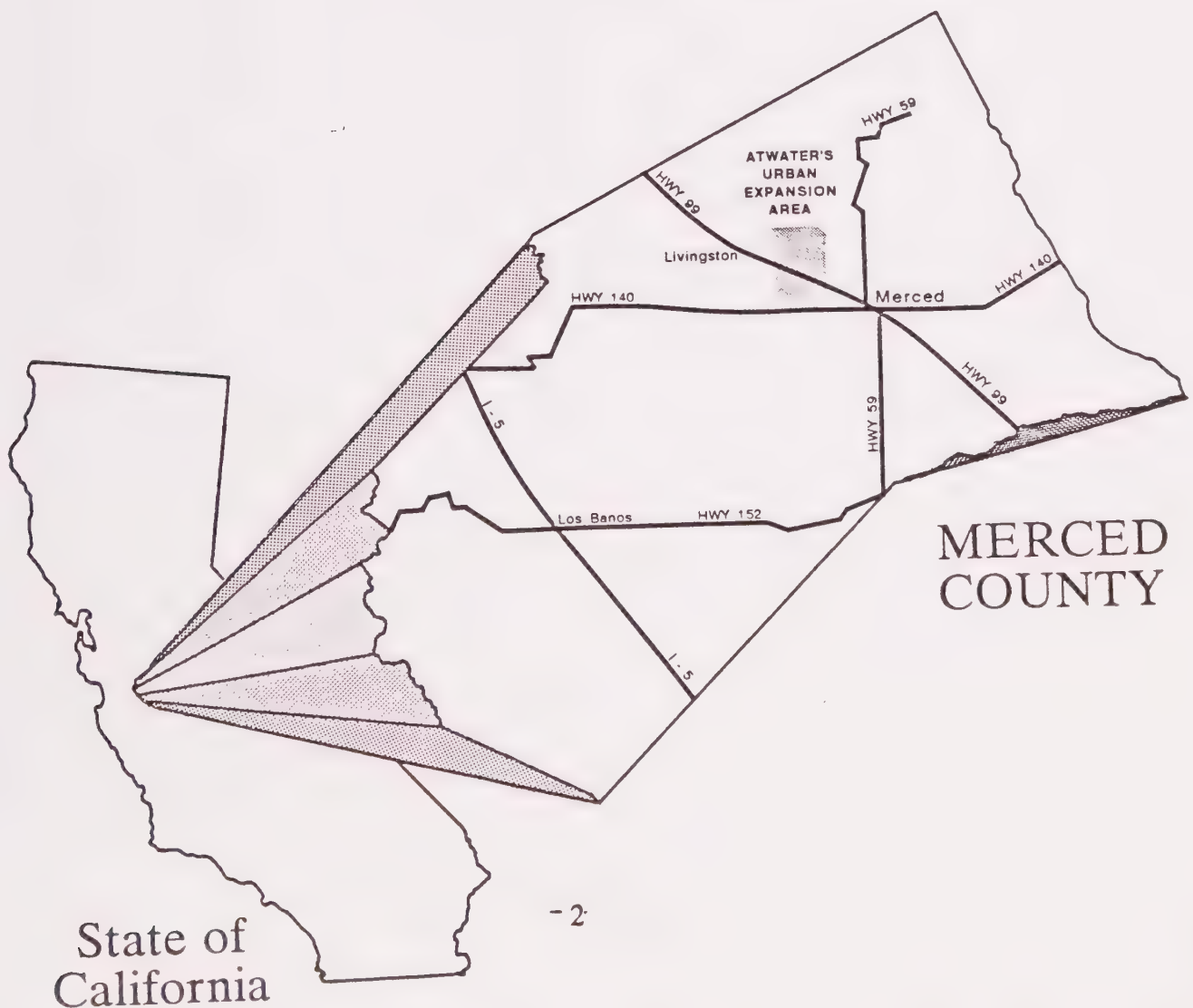
Before the settlement of the northern San Joaquin Valley by Caucasian immigrants, the area was occupied by a Native American group known as the Yokuts. Spanish missionary expeditions in the early 1800s explored, but failed to settle in the area. American settlers appeared with the stage coach in the 1850s and began growing wheat and raising cattle. By the 1870s, the extension of the Central Pacific Railroad encouraged



development and the agricultural base began to diversify.

The history of Atwater, as compiled and documented by Mr. Jack Bleiman of the Atwater Historical Society (in the City of Atwater General Plan, 1981-2001) was perhaps most influenced initially by the actions of two men--John Mitchell and Marshall Atwater. Upon immigrating to California, John Mitchell industriously advanced his economic means and eventually purchased up to a half million acres of land which he leased out for dry-farming various grains. Upon his death, Mr. Mitchell left his huge estate to three of his nieces' families who formed the company that would lay out the city of Atwater.

Marshall Atwater was a prominent tenant farmer on Mitchell land who later purchased a large tract of land and settled near present day Atwater (ca. 1870). Atwater managed to convince the Central Pacific Railroad Company to place a switch and spur line to his grain warehouse (along present day Atwater Boulevard). The community grew and eventually incorporated in 1922. In 1941, Castle AFB was constructed and grew to become the home of the Strategic Air Command 93rd Bombardment Wing (currently flying B-52 bombers and KC-135 tankers and training their pilots).



## THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is a long-term, comprehensive framework for the physical, social, and economic development issues in a community's planning area. Atwater's General Plan is a long-range guide for attaining the City's goals within its ultimate service area and accommodating its population to the year 2012. A comprehensive document, it coordinates all components of the City's physical development.

State law requires all cities and counties to adopt and maintain a General Plan. It must include several elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety.

This General Plan Update revises the Land Use, Circulation, and Open Space/Conservation Elements. A revised Housing Element is currently underway, but will be adopted independently of this General Plan Update. The Noise and Safety Elements adopted in 1981 are not revised by this document and, therefore remain intact.

Finally, the General Plan may include optional elements.

The City of Atwater adopted a Scenic Highways Element in 1981 which remains in effect (a copy of the Scenic Corridors Map appears in the Appendix).

A new optional element of the General Plan is the Applegate Business Park specific Plan. While this Specific Plan is contained under separate cover, it is being considered concurrently with this General Plan Update.

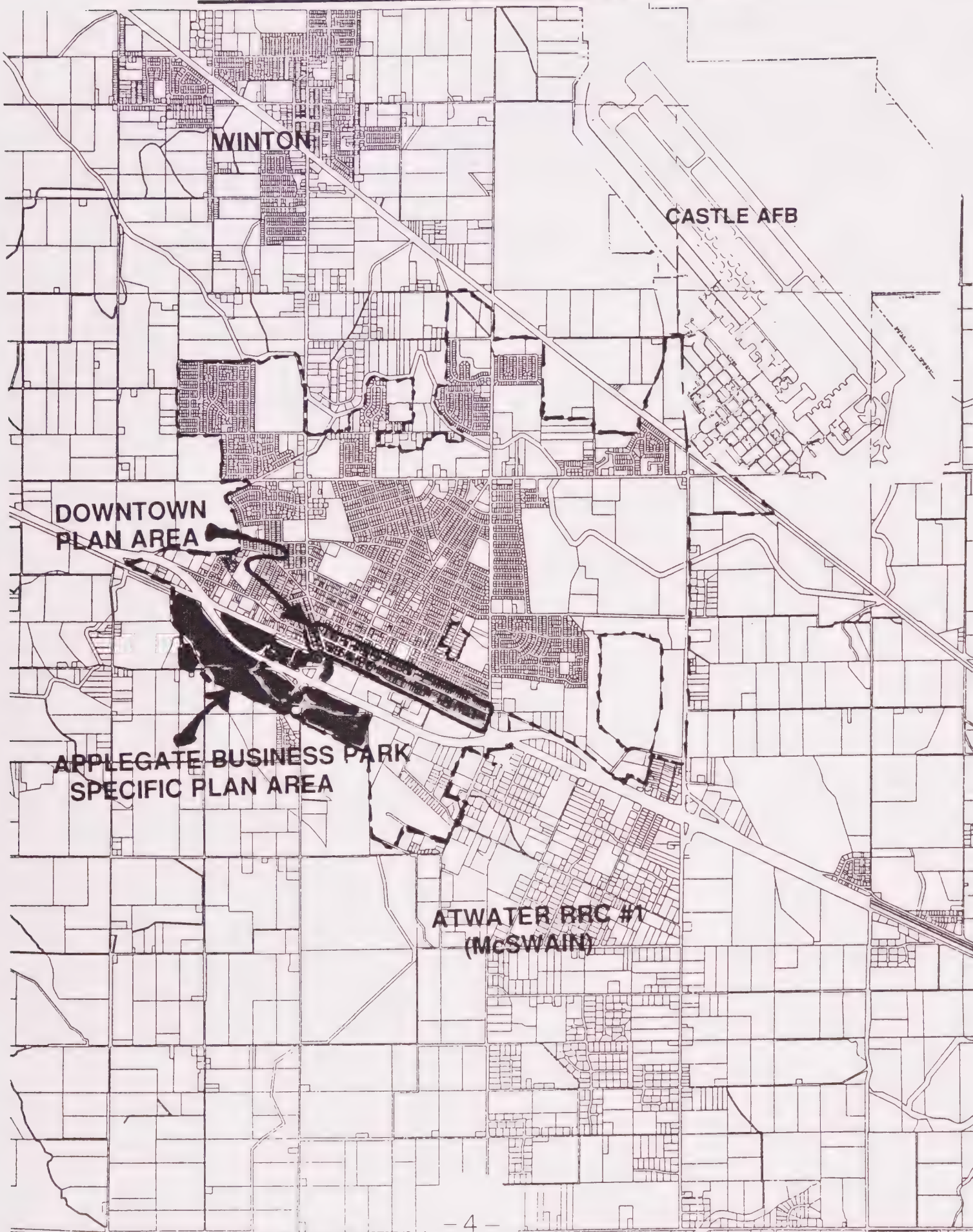
**TABLE 1**

**CITY OF ATWATER  
GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS**

<u>ELEMENT</u>	<u>FIRST ADOPTED</u>	<u>MAJOR REVISIONS</u>
Land Use	1958	1968, 1981, 1992
Circulation	1958	1968, 1982, 1992
Open Space/Conservation	1981	1992
Housing	1981	1986, 1992
Noise	1981	
Safety/Seismic Safety	1981	
Scenic Highways	1981	
Southwest Area Plan (Applegate Business Park Specific Plan)	1987	1991
Downtown Business District Plan	1979	



# **ATWATER VICINITY MAP**



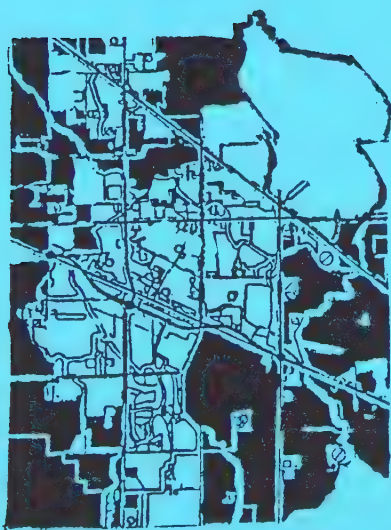
Requirements for the Land Use Element are detailed in Government Code Section 65302(a). The Land Use Element must, at a minimum, designate the proposed distribution and general location of land uses for housing, business, industry, open space and other public and private land uses. The element must also specify population density standards (e.g. Single Family Residential, 4-6 dwelling units per acre).

The General Plan may be amended by minor adjustments each year or, in the longer term, by major revisions or updates. Procedures to amend the General Plan are outlined in Government Code Sections 65350 et seq. The General Plan may be amended only "in the public interest," and only with broad support for a revision necessary to accommodate changing community conditions or attitudes. Each mandatory General Plan element (text and maps) may be amended as many as four times per year.





# **2.** **LAND USE**



**ATWATER GENERAL PLAN**

---



## 2. LAND USE

### POPULATION

A count from the 1990 census revealed a population of 21,816 in Atwater. Population projection estimates for the year 2000 range between 25,771 and 34,746 (City of Atwater, February 1989; Atwater City Planning Dept., May 1982) depending on the assumptions and calculation procedures. Using an exponential population projection based on estimated future employment from Merced County Association of Governments the Atwater population in the year 2010 would be estimated at approximately 48,947 persons. Considering the potential for explosive growth encountered in other valley communities, and conversely, the future of Castle AFB, this projection might prove erroneous. Table 1 displays population during the base years 1975-1988, and includes projections using the aforementioned model through the year 2020.

TABLE 2

POPULATION FORECAST ATWATER PLANNING AREA								
	1990	1991	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
ATWATER	22282	22798	25769	35326	41678	48947		
WINTON	6405	6405	6014	9559	11253	11967		
MC SWAIN	1904	1904	2190	2518	2896	3330		
TOTAL	30591	31107	33973	47403	55827	64244	73756	84676

### SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FACTORS

The economy of Atwater is dominated by agriculture and Castle AFB. A good portion of the City population is either working for, retired from, or dependents of workers at Castle AFB. In 1975, 61% of the working population was employed by the base (Atwater City Planning Dept., May 1982). In 1989, an estimated total of 17,252 military personnel and their dependents and some 6,575 retirees resided in the local area (Dept. of the Air Force, September 1989). Additionally, a large percentage of the private sector is dependent on this portion of the population for their livelihood. Castle AFB generates approximately 1,542 secondary jobs in the local area, and the base injects an estimated \$238 million annually to the local economy (Dept. of the Air Force, September 1989).

The population is young and highly transient. High unemployment among the civilian workforce exists due to the seasonal nature of agricultural employment. The airbase has a great influence on the demographic character of the community. Partly because Castle AFB operates in the Atwater area, the community is reasonably well-integrated racially, ethnically, and economically.

## URBAN EXPANSION

In 1981 the Atwater City Council adopted a *new* General Plan, thereby amending the City's prior General Plan which had been adopted in 1968. The primary purpose in *updating* the 1981 General Plan is to articulate the City's policies regarding urban growth.

Specifically, this *General Plan Update* addresses:

- 1) the geographic direction future Urban Development should take,
- 2) the density of future Urban Development, and
- 3) the distribution of future Urban Development.

While the 1981 General Plan was intended to be a 20 year Plan, by 1990 it became aparent that the City of Atwater was running out of undeveloped land area. To compound matters the City faces some major constraints on all of it's edges. This is ironic because Atwater is surrounded by unincorporated County territory.

The first step in preparing a meaningful plan for urban expansion is to follow the State of California *General Plan Guidelines* for preparing a General Plan. The following is reproduced from this document:

### SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

#### Geographic Comprehensiveness

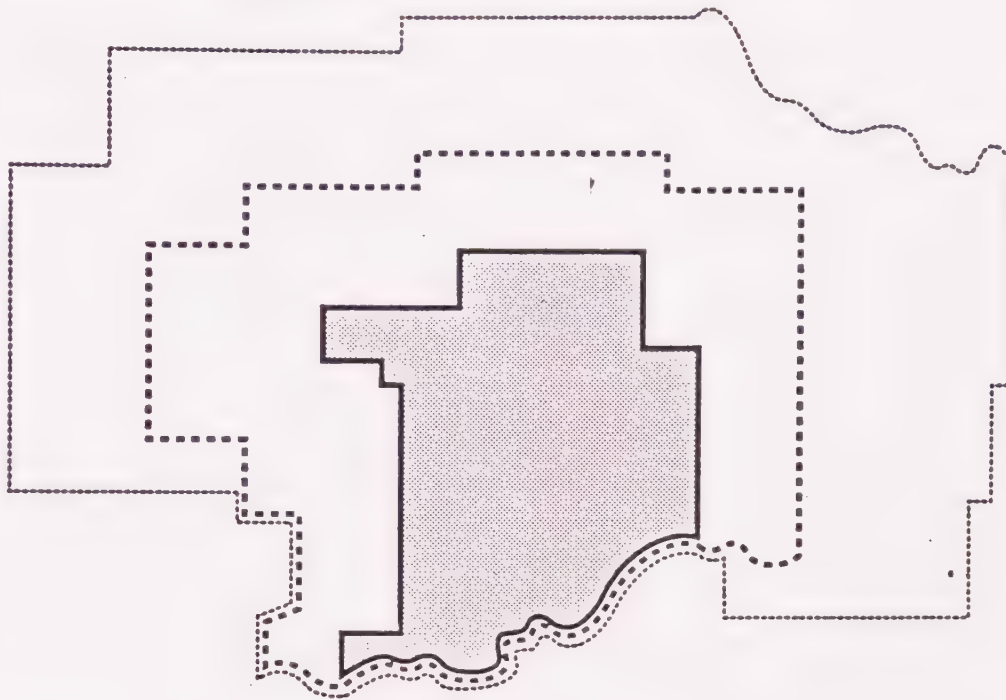
The general plan must cover all territory within the boundaries of the adopting city or county as well as "any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning" (Government Code Section 65300). For cities, this means all incorporated territory, both public and private. Counties must address all unincorporated areas.

In addition, since certain issues are not confined to political boundaries, the law provides for planning outside of the jurisdiction's territory. This is a means by which a local government can formally communicate its concerns for the future of lands under its neighbors' jurisdictions. Cooperative "extraterritorial" planning can be used to guide the orderly and efficient extension of services and utilities, ensure the preservation of open space, agricultural, and resource conservation lands, and establish consistent standards for development in the plans of adjoining jurisdictions.



FIGURE 2

## Theoretical Relationship Between a City's Planning Area and Sphere of Influence



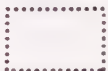
**Current City Limits:**

Encompasses incorporated territory where land use is controlled by the city.



**City's "Sphere-of-Influence" adopted by the LAFCO:**

Encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory which is the city's ultimate service area.



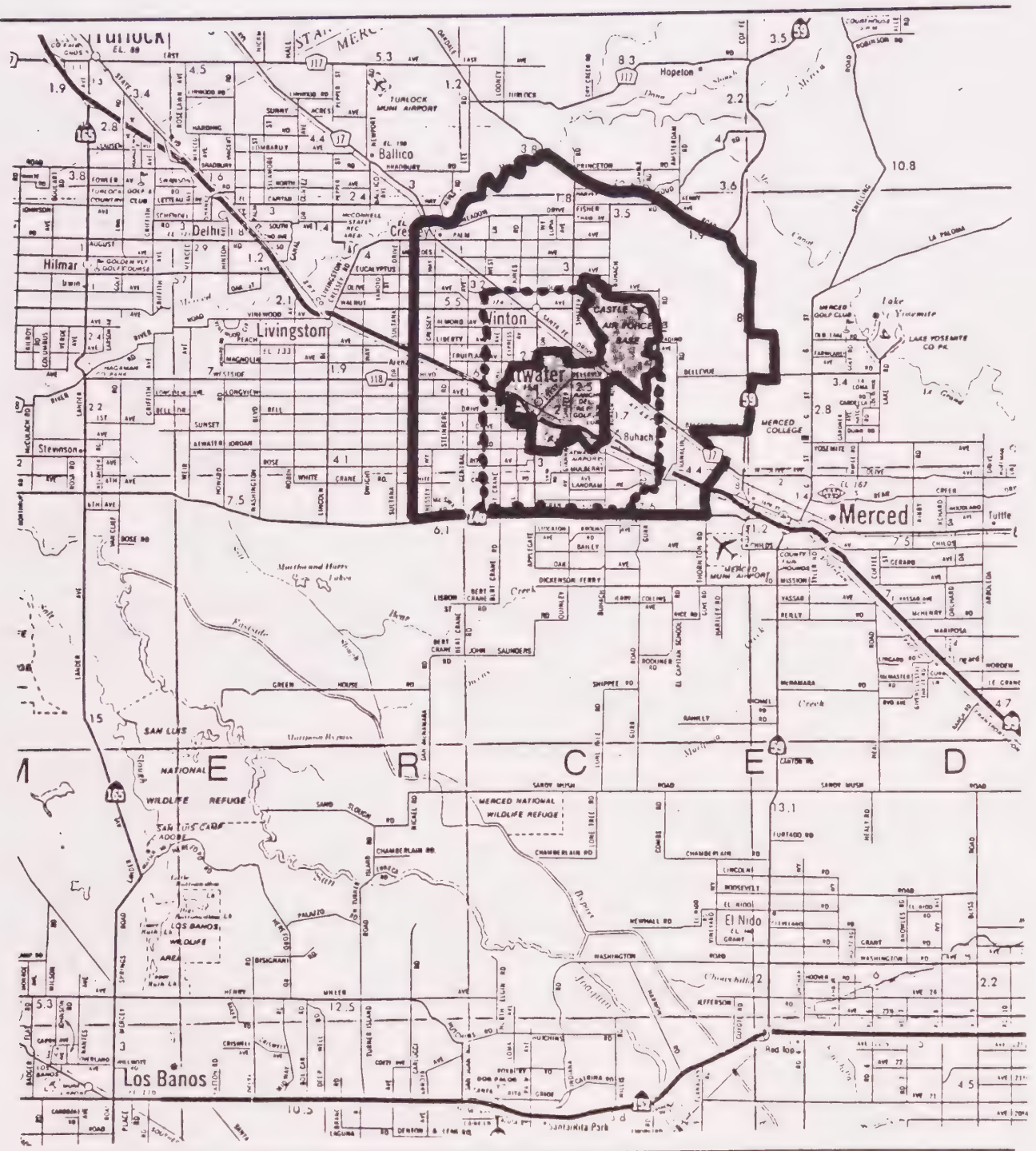
**City's Planning Area Boundary:**

Encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory bearing a relation to the city's planning. Where desirable the planning area may extend beyond the sphere-of-influence.

Coordinating city and county actions in unincorporated urban fringe areas is a continuing problem for local governments. Cities and counties should work together to delineate planning areas and develop formal agreements for processing development proposals. As urbanization occurs and cities expand, the potential for conflict between cities competing for the same lands increases. Inter-city cooperation in establishing planning areas can mediate and avoid such disputes.

When determining its planning area, each city should consider its sphere of influence. The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in every county adopts a sphere of influence for each city to represent "the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area" of that city. Although there is no direct statutory link between the sphere and the planning area, the former provides a convenient measure of the city's region of interest. Sometimes cities may need to extend their planning areas beyond their spheres when they are coordinating their plans with those of other jurisdictions.

# FIGURE 3 PLANNING AREA AND URBAN EXPANSION AREA



- Planning Area
- Urban Expansion Area [Proposed Sphere of Influence]
- Sphere of Influence [1984 - ]



TABLE 3

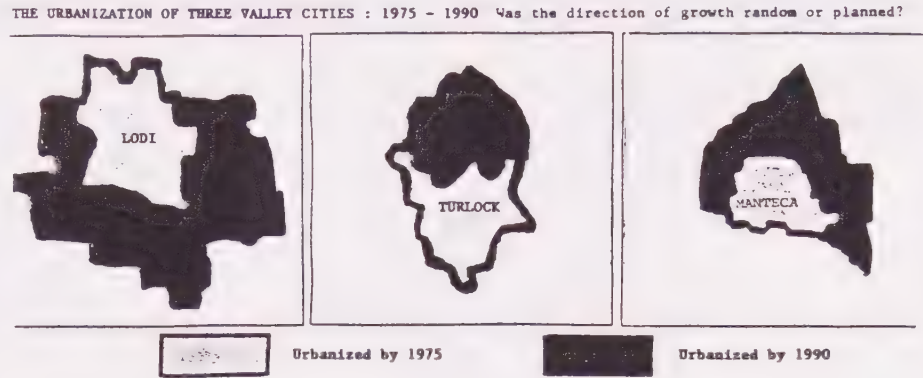
## ATWATER EXPANSION

DIRECTION	PROS (OPPORTUNITIES)	CONS (CONSTRAINTS)
NORTH	<p>Promotes infill of development  Proximity to Castle AFB  Avoids flood plain and dam inundation areas  Potentially more serviceable for sewage  Lower road infrastructure costs  Least damaging to agriculture  Permits Atwater/Merced buffer</p> <hr/>	<p>Castle AFB noise  Loss of Winton community distinction  Smaller parcels; difficult to develop  More existing canal facilities improvements  Increases traffic on north-south arterials  Destroys prime farmlands</p> <hr/>
SOUTH	<p>Developable large parcels  Good access to and from Highway 99  Less traffic on arterials north of Highway 99  Proximity to business park jobs  Permits Atwater/Winton buffer  Permits Atwater/Merced buffer</p> <hr/>	<p>Freeway  Located within inundation area  Natural wetland area to the southwest  Need for pumping stations for sewage  Destroys prime farmlands  Most expensive road infrastructure  Highway 99 splits community  Proximity to sewage treatment plant</p> <hr/>
EAST	<p>Proximity to Castle AFB  More serviceable for sewage  Protects Winton community identity  Partially avoids dam inundation area  Limits traffic increases on Winton Way  Permits Atwater/Winton buffer</p> <hr/>	<p>Encroachment into 100 year flood plain  Castle AFB noise and safety zones  Smaller parcels; difficult to develop  Destroys prime farmlands  Loss of community identity  Need for road system improvements  Need for new freeway interchange</p> <hr/>
WEST	<p>Developable large parcels  Avoids flood plain and dam inundation areas  Avoids conflict with Castle AFB  Protects Winton community identity  Permits a new entrance to the community  Permits Atwater/Winton buffer  Permits Atwater/Merced buffer</p> <hr/>	<p>Destroys prime farmlands  Some pumping for sewage  J.R. Fruit processing plant  Need for new interchange  Need for road system improvements</p> <hr/>



A significant amount of the public participation process upon which this document is based centered on which direction(s) the City should grow. While Atwater is surrounded by unincorporated territory on all four sides, Table 2 indicates that there are constraints in each direction.

Urban Form maps identifying the desired pattern for the City's future growth were prepared by three subcommittees of the General Plan Advisory Committee, the City Staff and the City's consultants.



The five Alternative Urban Form Maps produced more similarities than dissimilarities. Until recently the the direction of growth for Atwater has been presumed to lead easterly while that for the City of Merced to lead westerly. During 1991 the City of Merced approved a northern pattern of future urbanization.

### CITY OF ATWATER - GROWTH ALTERNATIVES



Development to the south was strongly favored. Large parcels of undeveloped land in this area enable long term financing for capital improvements and infrastructure.

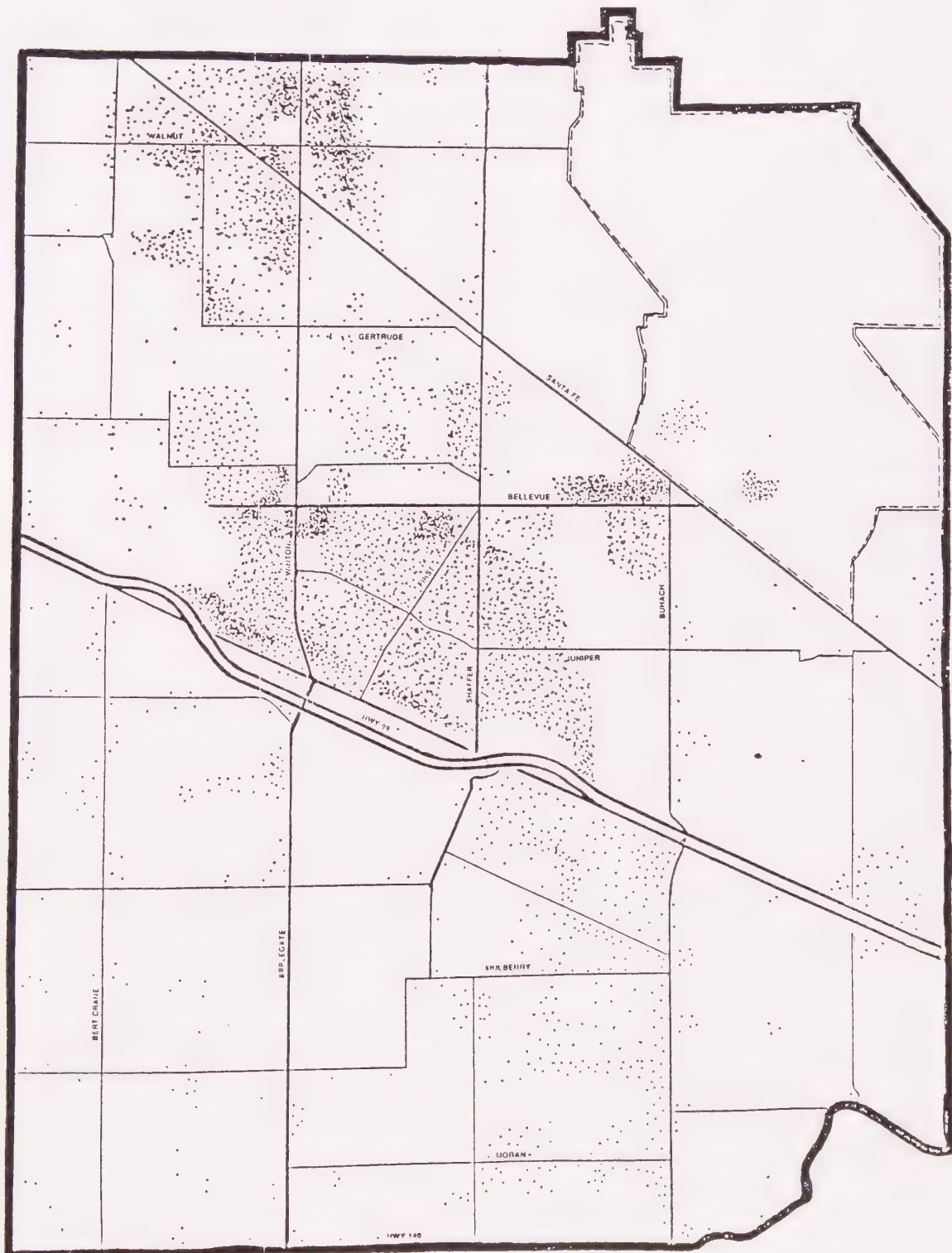
Westerly expansion is largely dependent on J. R. Wood Inc. This agribusiness controls the key properties necessary for implementing urbanization to the west.

Constraints to expanding easterly include: 1) the aircraft noise factors, (the reuse of Castle AFB is presumed to utilize the airport), 2) much of the area remains within the 100 year flood plain regardless of Castle Reservoir construction, and, 3) the Atwater RRC #2, (one plus acre home lots) severs logical annexation for new urban development.

While the ultimate urban service area, (Sphere of Interest), is proposed to extend in all four directions, this document recommends a three phased program for urbanization, (see Chapter VI).

## FIGURE 4

Each Dot Equals Approximately 15 People





## LAND USE

As mentioned earlier, the dominant land use in the Atwater planning area is agriculture (encompassing 86% of the land area). The predominant crop in the Atwater/Winton/Livingston area is almonds (comprising approximately 32% of the agricultural acreage). Sharing secondary significance are pasture/range, grains (corn and oats), and grapes (14%, 13%, and 13%, respectively). Sweet potato and fruit orchards (peach/nectarine/plum) comprise about 4.5% and 3.7%, respectively, of the agricultural land in the area. Relative to Atwater, cropping patterns in the planning area can be summarized as follows: the area south of Highway 99 is characterized by primarily almond orchards and grains; east of City limits and beyond the airbase includes more almonds and grains, but also pasture, grapes, and poultry; area north of Atwater and Winton includes almonds, grapes, fruit trees, and more pasture (among others) moving towards the Merced River; area to the west includes primarily almond and fruit orchards. (All data from Merced County Dept. of Agriculture, January 1991).

Institutional uses, which include the expansive Castle AFB, encompass about 6% of the land area. Residential areas (all densities) cover approximately 6% of the landscape. Table 4 lists existing land use acreages by category for the general planning area.

The land use pattern in the City of Atwater itself is generally defined by: the Central Business District located along Broadway Avenue and Atwater Boulevard roughly between Winton Way and First Street; the commercial strip located along the majority of the expanse of Atwater Boulevard; the industrial areas located south of Atwater Boulevard and south of Highway 99 adjacent to the airport and sewage treatment facility; and the commercial strip located along Bellevue Road in the northern portion of the city. Major institutional land use areas include: the land owned and operated by the U.S. Air Force (Castle AFB) immediately northeast of the city; the various public schools (most notably the high school and Mitchell Elementary [Senior and Junior]); and the area including Saint Anthony's School and other buildings along Winton Way. Areas with high density residential units are concentrated generally proximate to the intersection of Bellevue Road and Winton Way (apartments); north of Bellevue Road towards Buhach Road (apartments and mobile homes); and along Olive Avenue between Atwater Boulevard and towards the western City limits (apartments and mobile homes). Residential uses comprise the primary land use in remaining areas of the City.

The City of Atwater Planning Department has defined the area bounded roughly by Grove Avenue on the west, Olive Avenue on the north, the eastern boundary of Castle AFB and Fox and Trinidad Roads on the east, and Highway 140 on the south as the Atwater "Urban Expansion Area." This area represents Atwater's proposed "Sphere of Influence" and is consistent with the State. The General Plan is meant to direct development policies for the next twenty years within this area. Table 4 compares existing land use acreages with proposed land use acreages within the Atwater Urban Expansion Area. While

Figure 5 shows the current urban land use pattern within the City of Atwater Urban Expansion Area, Figure 6 shows the proposed land use.

TABLE 4

EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND USE ACREAGE COMPARISON				
	Existing		Proposed	
	ACRES	%	ACRES	%
Rural Agriculture	615	3.07	6529	32.57
Single Family Residential	1244	6.21	2210	11.02
Planned Development	246	1.23	251	1.25
Multifamily	133	0.66	148	0.74
Commercial Residential Transition	0	0.00	23	0.11
Commercial	216	1.08	264	1.32
Business Park	8	0.04	714	3.56
Manufacturing	126	0.63	34	0.17
Institutional	169	0.84	97	0.48
Castle S.P.A.	2402	11.98	2402	11.98
Schools	170	0.85	301	1.50
Parks/Open Space	80	0.40	1245	6.21
Commercial Recreation	120	0.60	263	1.31
Ag Industrial	19	0.09	0	0.00
Networks (Roads, Canals, etc.)	2114	10.55	5566	27.76
AGRICULTURAL	11679	58.26	0	0.00
VACANT	706	3.52	0	0.00
TOTAL	20047	100.00	20047	100.00

REVISED 2/21/92

Certain areas in Atwater may benefit from revitalization and infill. The Merced County Planning Department (June 1989) calculated vacant acreage (using aerial photos taken in 1979) within various Specific Urban Development Plan areas (SUDP's, or areas designated by the county for urbanization). Assuming a density of three persons per household, the vacant acreages within Atwater (2,050 ac.) and Winton (627 ac.) could support a theoretical 10,240 and 3,135 additional dwelling units, respectively (at 5 per acre); which could theoretically support a total population of approximately 48,280 people



FIGURE 5  
EXISTING LAND USE





# URBAN EXPANSION AREA ATWATER FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

FIGURE 6

August, 1992

## OPEN SPACE

- EXISTING PARKS
- FUTURE PARKS
- LINEAR PARKS & PATHWAYS
- TRAILS
- COMMERCIAL RECREATION

## RESIDENTIAL

- RURAL / AGRICULTURAL  
0 - 3 UNITS/ACRE
- SINGLE FAMILY  
1 - 5 UNITS/ACRE
- PLANNED DEVELOPMENT  
4 - 7 UNITS/ACRE
- MULTI FAMILY  
7 - 15 UNITS/ACRE
- MULTI FAMILY - HIGH DENSITY OPTION  
15 - 35 UNITS/ACRE

## WORK PLACE

- COMMERCIAL
- BUSINESS PARK
- MANUFACTURING
- COMMERCIAL - RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

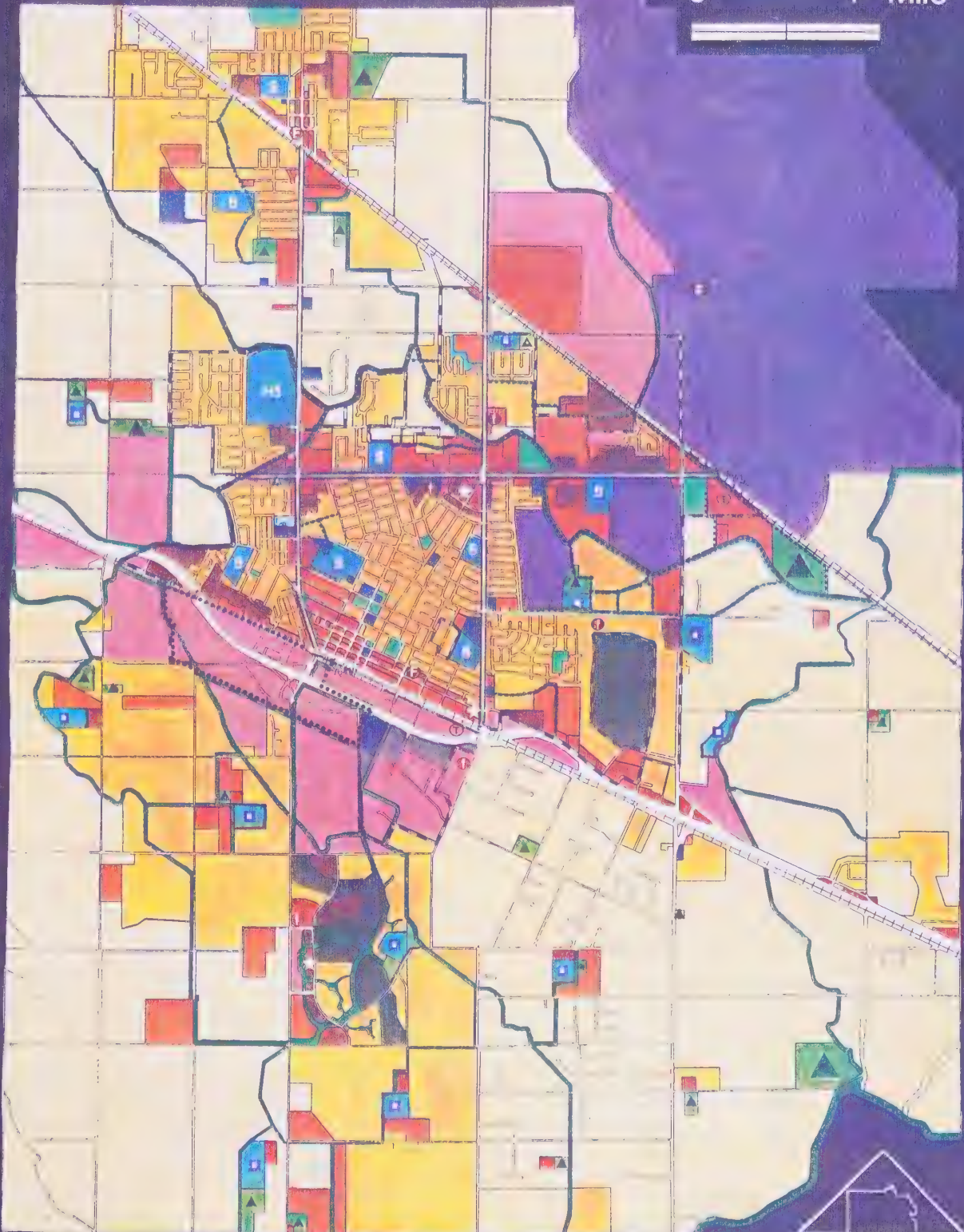
- EXISTING SCHOOL
- FUTURE SCHOOL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- TRANSIT DEPOT
- FIRE STATION EXISTING
- POTENTIAL

## SPECIFIC PLAN AREAS

- APPLEGATE S.P.A.
- CASTLE S.P.A.
- ATWATER CITY LIMITS, (1992)

0

1 Mile

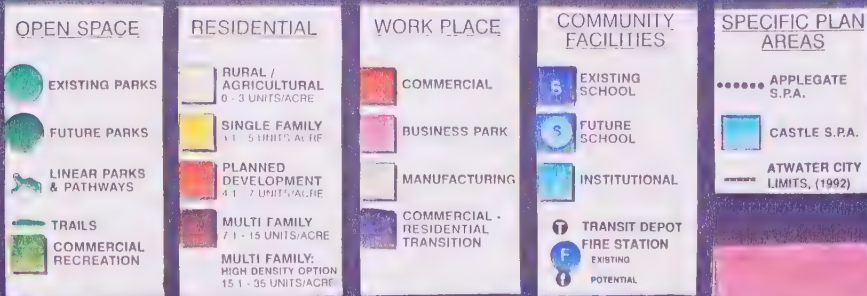




# CENTRAL AREA ATWATER FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

FIGURE 7

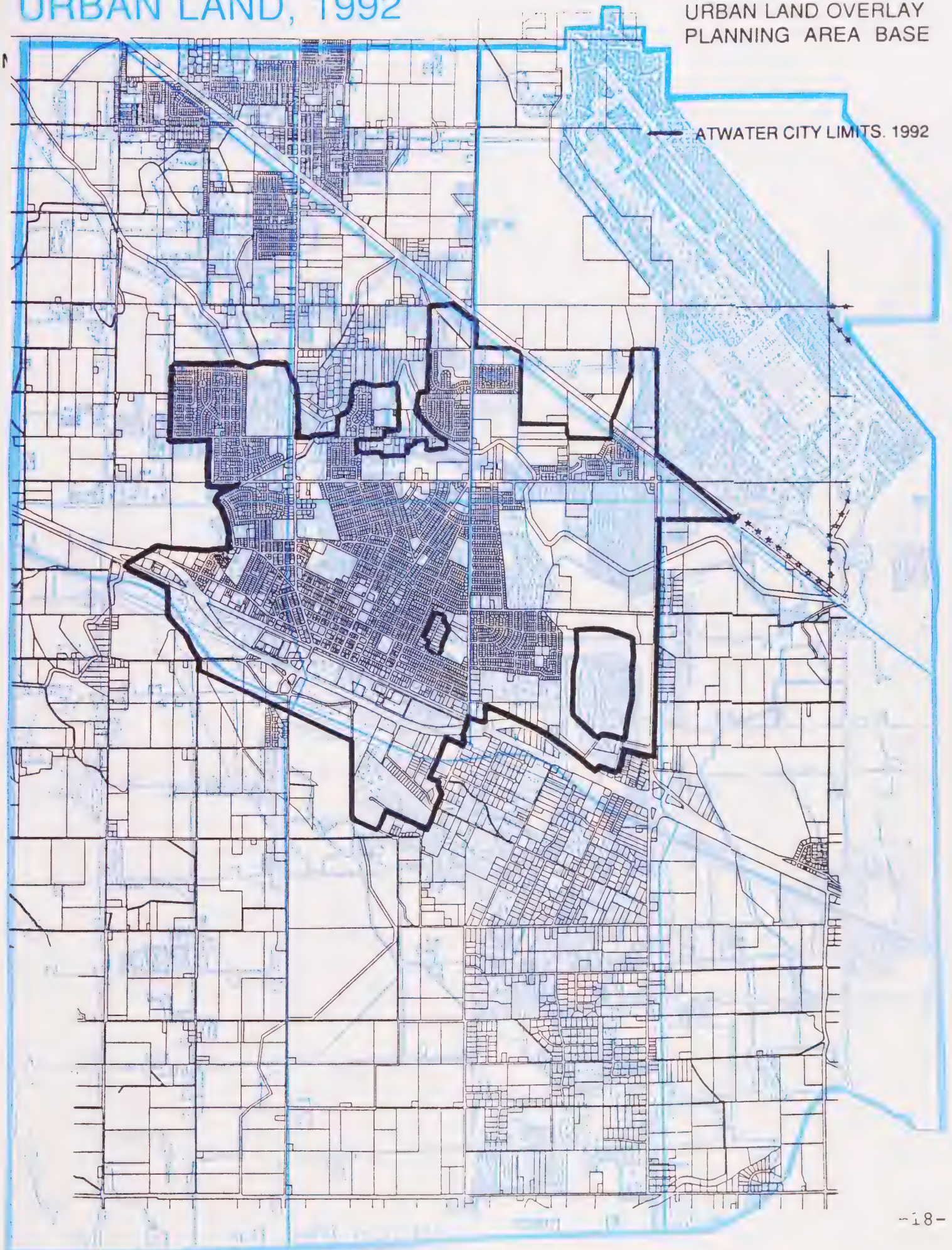
August, 1992





# URBAN LAND, 1992

FIGURE 8  
URBAN LAND OVERLAY  
PLANNING AREA BASE



- DEVELOPED LAND (roads, canals, runways, homesites, parks, farm buildings, etc.)
- UNDERDEVELOPED LAND (orchard, vacant, grazing and crop lands)



## ATWATER FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

August, 1992

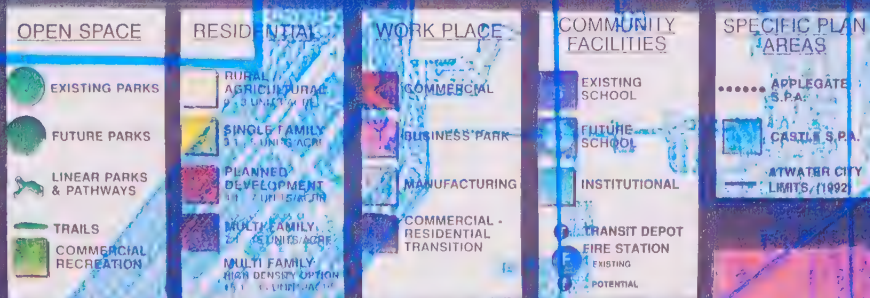
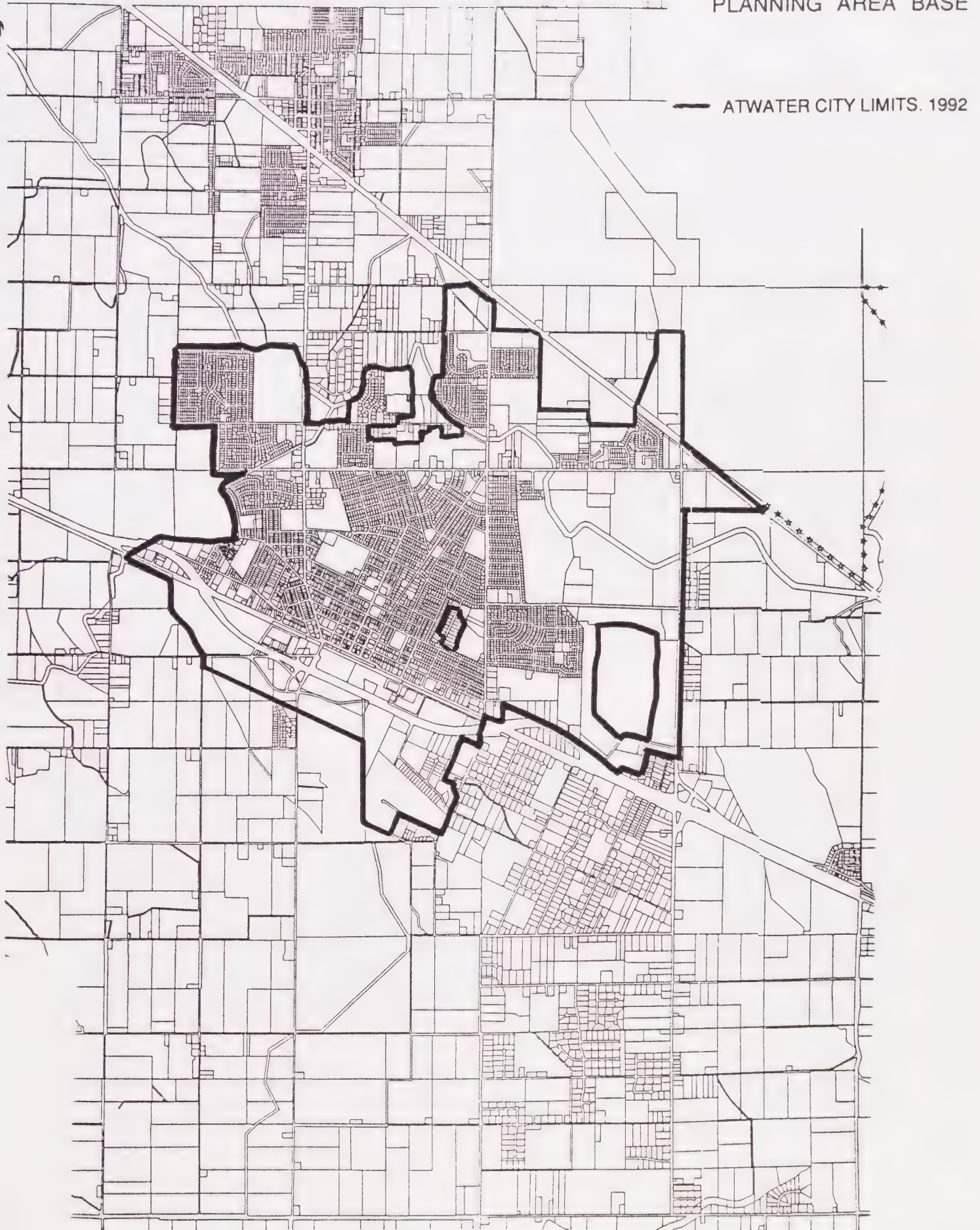




FIGURE 8  
URBAN LAND OVERLAY  
PLANNING AREA BASE



in Atwater and 14,400 people in Winton. Table 5 shows build-out population of the planning area with the proposed land use designations. Table 6 then shows that the plan could support populations beyond 2015, and also identifies the demand for City infrastructure and schools.

TABLE 5

PROPOSED LAND USE BUILD OUT POPULATION				
ACRES	DENSITY	HOUSEHOLD	POPULATION	% RES. LAND
<i>RURAL/AGRICULTURE</i>				
6529	1.5	3.1	30360	71%
<i>SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL</i>				
2210	4.5	3.1	30830	24%
<i>PLANNED DEVELOPMENT</i>				
251	6.0	3.1	4669	3%
<i>MULTIFAMILY</i>				
145	12.0	3.1	5394	2%
<i>MULTIFAMILY (HIGH DENSITY OPTION)</i>				
3	22.0	3.1	205	* *
<b>TOTAL</b>				
9138			71,457	100 %

REVISED 2/26/92

In 1990, Atwater, with the City and County of Merced, jointly filed an application to the Department of Commerce to form "enterprise zones" in their respective areas. These zones offer certain incentives to current and prospective businesses including: tax credits for sales and use taxes incurred on machinery purchases, tax credits for hiring qualified employees, interest deductions for loans to firms within the area, and fifteen year net operating loss carry-forward, among others. The extent of this proposed zone in Atwater includes: the industrial area south of Highway 99; all of the commercial/industrial area within the Redevelopment Project area; the property south of the city limits to Atwater-Jordan Road, bounded by Hull Avenue to the west and Gianini Road to the east; and the property west of city limits, north of Highway 99, south of Bellevue Road, and east of Vine Avenue.

Zoning within the area south of Atwater Boulevard, consistent with the recent enterprise zone proposal, is predominantly light-industrial or industrial. Development is either planned or continuing in vacant areas along Winton Way near Bellevue Road, along

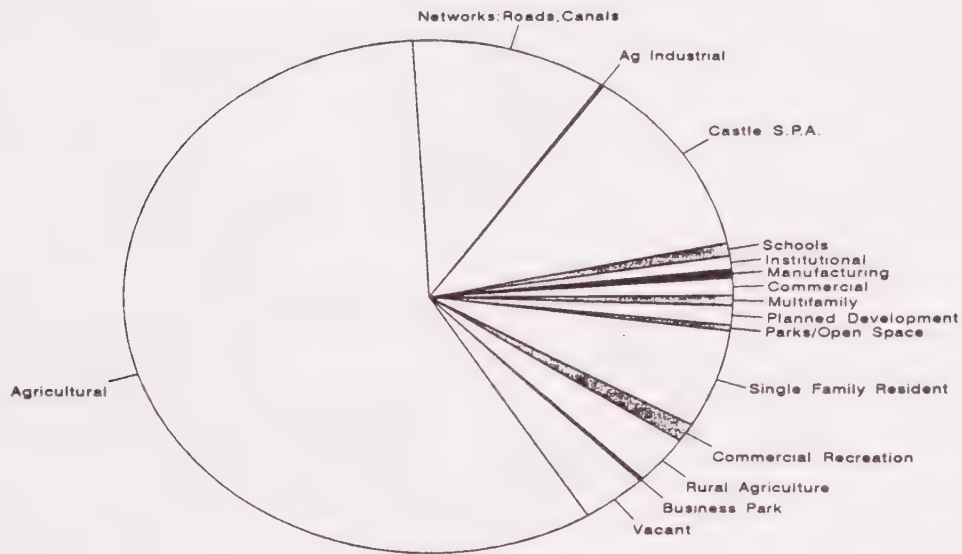


CITY OF ATWATER GENERAL PLAN													
24-Feb-92			Land Use, Housing & Public Service Projections										
					1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2115			
ASSUMPTIONS:			POPULATION PROJECTION		30591	33973	47403	55827	64244	73756			
Net Population Growth						3382	13430	8424	8417	9512			
DU'S/ ACRE	PERSONS/ HOUSEHOLD	MARKET SHARE	RESIDENTIAL LAND USE	DENSITY/ INTENSITY						2010 TOTALS	2015 TOTALS	CUMULATIVE TOTAL	
1.5	3.1	71.45%	Low	0 to 3									
			DU's			404	1603	1006	1005	1136	4018	5154	5153.6
			Acres		615	403.8	1603.5	1005.8	1004.9	1135.7	4018	5154	
			Traffic ADT			9085.2	36077.7	22629.8	22611.0	25552.6	90404	115956	
4.5	3.1	24.18%	Low	3.1 to 5									
			DU's			491	1950	1223	1222	1381	4887	6268	6267.9
			Acres		1244	163.7	650.0	407.7	407.4	460.4	1629	2089	
			Traffic ADT			3683.2	14626.1	9174.2	9166.6	10359.1	36650	47009	
6.0	3.1	2.75%	Medium	4.1 to 7									
			DU's			153	607	381	380	430	1520	1950	1950.0
			Acres		246	25.5	101.1	63.4	63.4	71.6	253	325	
			Traffic ADT			1145.9	4550.3	2854.2	2851.8	3222.8	11402	14625	
12.0	3.1	1.59%	Medium High	7.1 to 15									
			DU's			44	173	109	109	123	434	557	557.1
			Acres		133	2.9	11.6	7.2	7.2	8.2	29	37	
			Traffic ADT			199.7	793.1	497.4	497.0	561.7	1987	2549	
22.0	3.1	0.03%	Medium High	15.1 to 22									
			DU's			0	1	1	1	1	3	4	4.2
			Acres		0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	
			Traffic ADT			1.0	4.1	2.5	2.5	2.9	10	13	
Total DU's						1092	4335	2719	2717	3070	10863	13933	13933
Total Acres					3694	595.9	2366.2	1484.2	1483.0	1675.9	5929.3	7605.3	
Total Res. ADT						14115.1	56051.2	35158.3	35129.1	39699.1	140453.6	180152.7	
(pop. X			RESIDENTIAL WASTEWATER (AGP		2582593	388930	1544450	968760	967955	1093880	3870095	4963975	6452688
(acres X 1600 GPAD)			INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER (AGPD)		286955	32792	130217	81679	81611	92228	326299	418528	613254
(pop. X 235 GPCD)			WATER USE (AGPD)		6047222	794770	3223200	2021760	2020080	2282880	8059810	10342690	14107032
(.5 per DU)			STUDENTS K THRU 8TH		6668	546	2167	1360	1358	1535	5431	6966	12099
(.2 per DU)			STUDENTS 9TH THRU 12TH		2135	119	473	297	297	335	1186	1521	3321
ACRES/1000 PERSONS OTHER LAND USE													
7.79		Commercial			319.0	26.3	104.6	65.6	65.6	74.1	262	336	
5.96		Business Park			19.0	20.2	80.0	50.2	50.2	56.7	201	257	
6.06		Manufacturing			268.0	20.5	81.4	51.0	51.0	57.6	204	262	
Total					606.0	67.0	266.0	166.9	166.7	188.4	667	855	1272.7
Grand Total					4300.0	662.9	2632.3	1651.1	1649.7	1864.4	6596	8460	10896.0

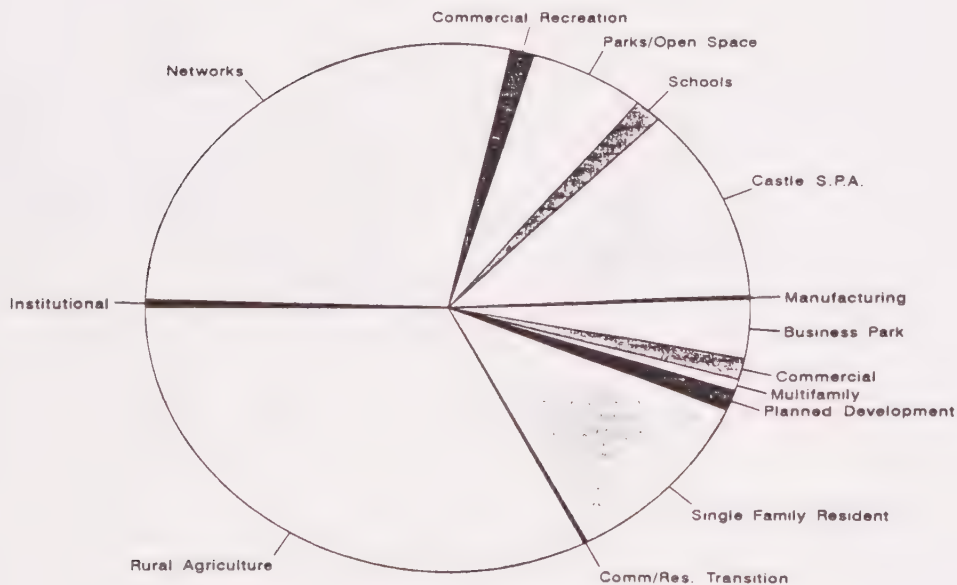
TABLE 6  
LAND USE PROJECTIONS

Shaffer Road north of Livingston Canal, along Bellevue Road in and adjacent to the Atwater Village Shopping Center, and in the undeveloped areas north and west of the golf course. Outside of the urbanizing area, the land is generally zoned agricultural by the county.

## LAND USE ACREAGE COMPARISON



EXISTING LAND USE



PROPOSED LAND USE



# LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Future Land Use Plan classifies all lands in the Planning Area, (proposed Sphere of Influence), according to 15 basic categories, some of which have a sub-category.

Listed below are the 15 basic land uses and the 4 sub-categories:

## Residential

- 1. Rural / Agricultural : 0 - 3 dwelling units/acre**
- 2. Single Family : 3.1 - 5 dwelling units/acre**
- 3. Planned Development : 4.1 - 7 dwelling units/acre**
- 4. Multi Family : 7.1 - 15 dwelling units/acre**
- 4-H. Multi Family - High Density Option : 15.1 - 35 dwelling units/acre**

## Workplace

- 5. Commercial**
- 6. Business Park**
- 7. Manufacturing**
- 8. Commercial-Residential Transition**

## Community Facilities

- 9. Existing Schools**
- 9-F. Future Schools**
- 10. Institutional**
- 10-T. Train Station**

## Open Space

- 11. Existing Parks**
- 11-F. Future Parks**
- 12. Linear Parks and Pathways**
- 13. Commercial Recreation**

## Specific Plan Areas

- 14. Applegate Specific Plan Area**
- 15. Castle Specific Plan Area**

# Residential Group

## **1. RURAL / AGRICULTURAL**

The Rural / Agricultural Residential Land Use category represents properties which currently are devoted to agricultural or large lot, (one plus acres), single family home sites.

This designation is a critical component of the Atwater General Plan because it will shape the City's long range urban form. This category represents those areas considered to be the fringe of the City where a transition from intense urban to rural should occur.

Three dwelling units per acre, (the maximum density permitted), is intended to accomodate single family residential planned development and estate homesites. Either Planned Development, (PD) Zoning or Residential Estate, (RE) - 14,500 square foot minimum lot size - Zoning is appropriate within this category.



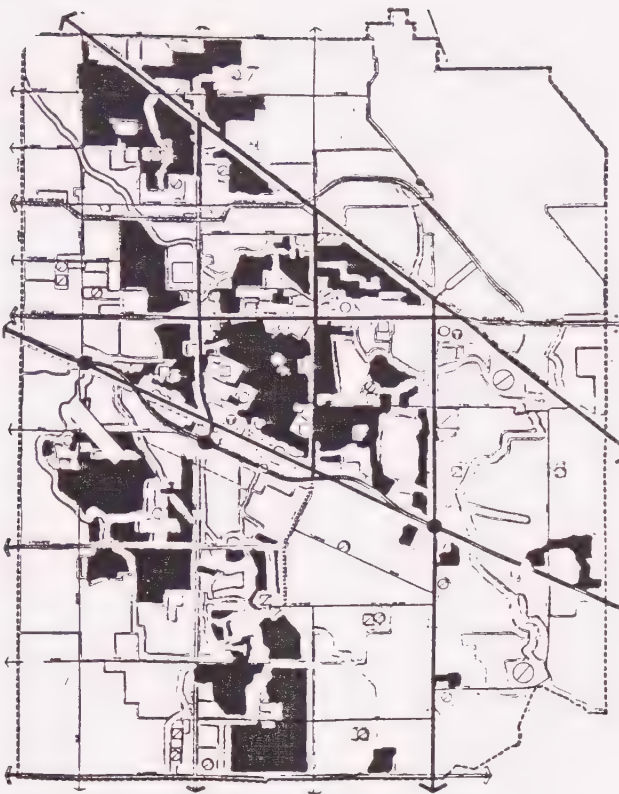
Connection to City water and sewer shall be required for all subdivisions within this category. Further, Urbanization within this category should occur in incremental phases - those properties closer to the urban infrastructure developing prior to "outstep" annexations. In this way agricultural activity on the City's fringe should be protected from urban intrusion for the duration of and beyond this plan's 20 year horizon.

---

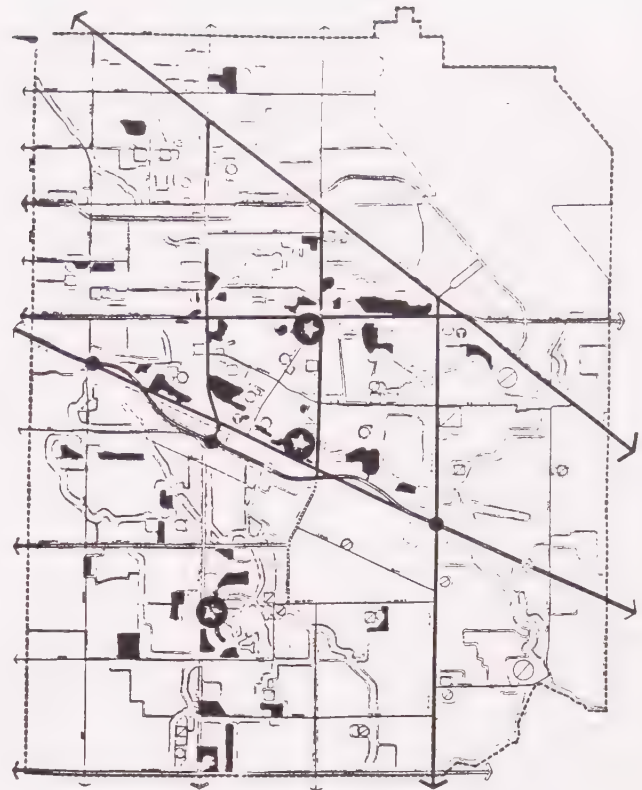
## **2. SINGLE FAMILY**

This category represents a basic density range of 3 to 5 dwelling units per acre, and is typical of the densities within existing single family residential subdivisions throughout the City. At present approximately 1413 acres within the Planning area are devoted to single family housing. An additional 1913 acres of undeveloped land are designated for the single family land use category.

The large proportion of future urban residential land devoted to single family homes is a reflection of the desire to preserve the existing housing stock and to continue the single family lifestyle.



■ SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL  
LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



■ PLANNED DEVELOPMENT, MULTI  
FAMILY & COM.-RESIDENTIAL AREAS  
★ = High Density Option Locations

### 3. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

This category provides a basic density of 4.1 to 7 dwelling units to the gross acre. The *Meridian* townhome project exemplifies the intent of this General Plan designation as well as the City's Planned Development Zone.

Higher residential densities, on either small lot single family units or attached townhome or condominium developments are permitted in return for common open space. This open space may either be publicly dedicated or privately maintained by a homeowners association should be included with each Planned Development project. Further, a successful planned development project should include one or more of the following elements: zero lot line homes, (yielding more efficiency to the lot), landscaped walkways and/or bicycle paths, pedestrian-oriented street lights, (lower and more in scale with the environment), and recreational facilities, (swimming pool, kids' playlot, tennis courts, etc.).

Approximately 113 acres of undeveloped land have been set aside for this classification.

### 4. MULTI FAMILY

This category provides a density range of 7.1 to 15 dwellings per acre. It includes areas currently devoted to multi family residential construction as well as approximately 78 acres for new Garden Apartment construction.



# Residential Group

## **1. RURAL / AGRICULTURAL**

The Rural / Agricultural Residential Land Use category represents properties which currently are devoted to agricultural or large lot, (one plus acres), single family home sites.

This designation is a critical component of the Atwater General Plan because it will shape the City's long range urban form. This category represents those areas considered to be the fringe of the City where a transition from intense urban to rural should occur.

Three dwelling units per acre, (the maximum density permitted), is intended to accommodate single family residential planned development and estate homesites. Either Planned Development, (PD) Zoning or Residential Estate, (RE) - 14,500 square foot minimum lot size - Zoning is appropriate within this category.



Connection to City water and sewer shall be required for all subdivisions within this category. Further, Urbanization within this category should occur in incremental phases - those properties closer to the urban infrastructure developing prior to "outstep" annexations. In this way agricultural activity on the City's fringe should be protected from urban intrusion for the duration of and beyond this plan's 20 year horizon.

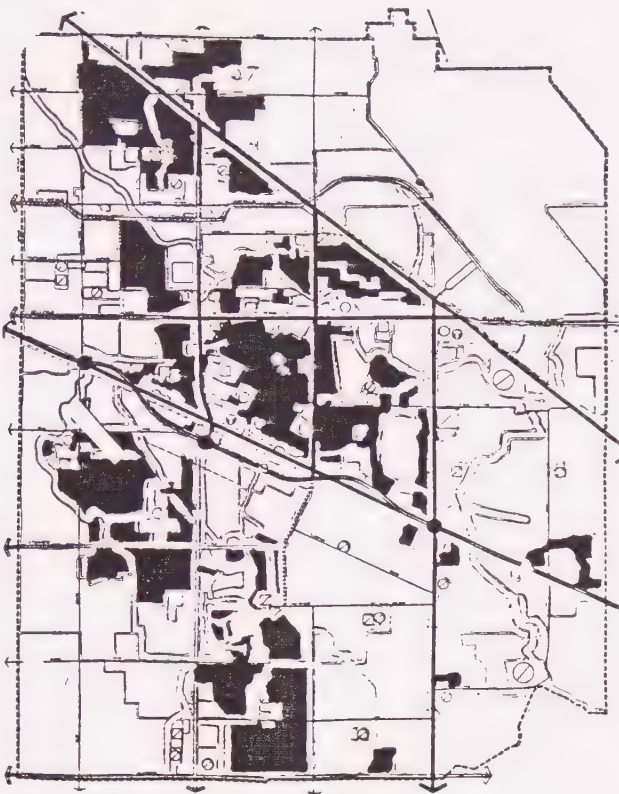
---

## **2. SINGLE FAMILY**

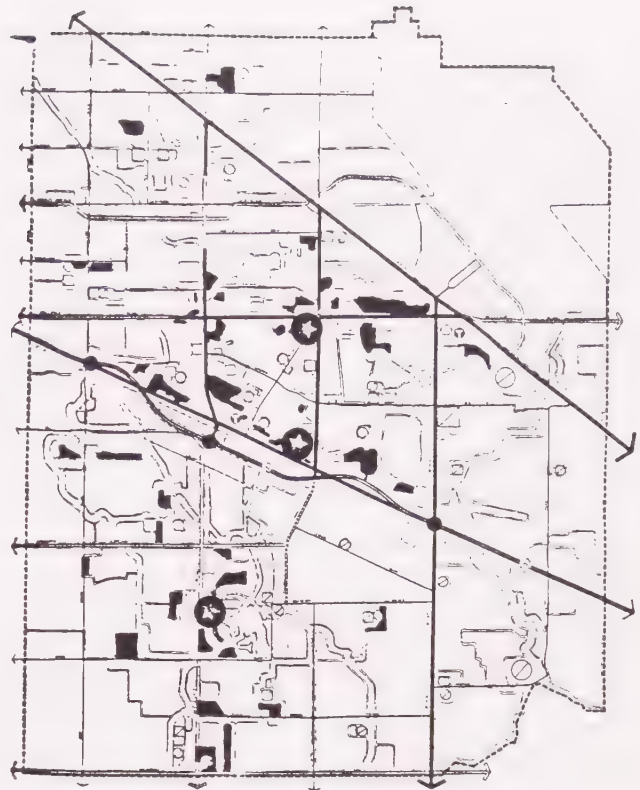
This category represents a basic density range of 3 to 5 dwelling units per acre, and is typical of the densities within existing single family residential subdivisions throughout the City. At present approximately 1413 acres within the Planning area are devoted to single family housing. An additional 1913 acres of undeveloped land are designated for the single family land use category.

The large proportion of future urban residential land devoted to single family homes is a reflection of the desire to preserve the existing housing stock and to continue the single family lifestyle.





■ SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL  
LAND USE DESIGNATIONS



■ PLANNED DEVELOPMENT, MULTI  
FAMILY & COM.-RESIDENTIAL AREAS  
★ = High Density Option Locations

### 3. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

This category provides a basic density of 4.1 to 7 dwelling units to the gross acre. The *Meridian* townhome project exemplifies the intent of this General Plan designation as well as the City's Planned Development Zone.

Higher residential densities, on either small lot single family units or attached townhome or condominium developments are permitted in return for common open space. This open space may either be publicly dedicated or privately maintained by a homeowners association should be included with each Planned Development project. Further, a successful planned development project should include one or more of the following elements: zero lot line homes, (yielding more efficiency to the lot), landscaped walkways and/or bicycle paths, pedestrian-oriented street lights, (lower and more in scale with the environment), and recreational facilities, (swimming pool, kids' playlot, tennis courts, etc.).

Approximately 113 acres of undeveloped land have been set aside for this classification.

### 4. MULTI FAMILY

This category provides a density range of 7.1 to 15 dwellings per acre. It includes areas currently devoted to multi family residential construction as well as approximately 78 acres for new Garden Apartment construction.

#### **4-H. HIGH DENSITY OPTION**

This category, permitting up to 35 dwelling units, is an "overlay" residential land use designation which is encouraged in three locations of the Planning Area. It would allow 3 or 4 story construction at what should be considered as Future Atwater's focal points: Downtown, Five Corners and the Applegate Ranch.

Higher residential densities are desirable within certain centers or sub-centers of the community to facilitate the commercial, recreational and/or cultural amenities intended within these focal points. Further, buildings above the City's current 35 foot height maximum would reinforce the focal point concept.

## **Workplace Group**

#### **5. COMMERCIAL**

This land use category is intended for general retail business and services, neighborhood commercial facilities as well as the existing "strip commercial" facilities. Office uses are considered compatible to the retail activities within this land use area. Zoning Districts which are consistent with the Commercial Land Use designation include: Commercial - Office, Central Commercial, Commercial Throughfare, Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial General.

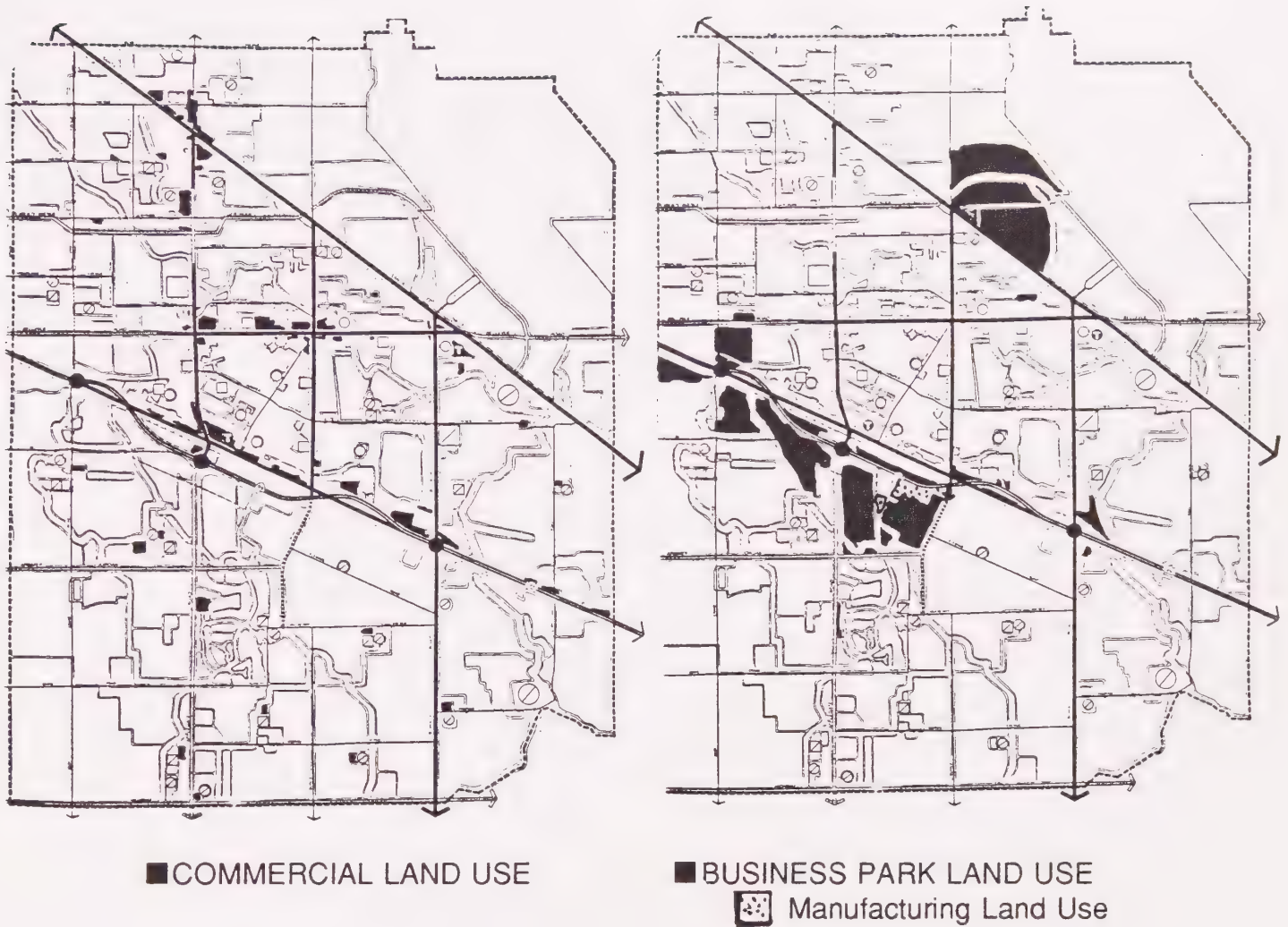
At present there are approximately 216 acres within the Planning Area devoted to Commercial uses. This plan adds another 157 acres of land to this category. This increase does not keep proportion with the projected population growth because the *Business Park* Category, identified next, also includes provisions for all activities identified within the Commercial category.

#### **6. BUSINESS PARK**

This category evolved from the City's development of the Applegate Specific Plan. This largely undeveloped portion of the City proximate to SPRR and Hwy 99 can logically support a mixture of warehouse/retail, highway related commercial uses, office/professional and light industrial uses in a compatible manner - provided that site plan review is built into the approval process. Therefore, a new zoning designation, Business Park (BP), shall be initiated by the City.

This General Plan Business Park category includes not only the Applegate Specific Plan Area but also includes the land area above Santa Fe Drive and west of Castle AFB, land occupied by J.R. Wood Company, westerly of the current City Limits as well as most of the land comprising Air Park Business Park as well as the Municipal Airport. A mix of commercial / office / and light manufacturing uses are permitted subject to development review on a case by case basis to insure quality standards.





## 7. MANUFACTURING

This category is intended for "heavy manufacturing" activities provided that noise, offensive odors, dust, vapor and/or glare can be mitigated at the operation's property line.

The proposed Manufacturing Land Use site is east of the Sewage Treatment Facility, westerly of Giannini Road. This land area encompasses approximately 46 acres.

## 8. COMMERCIAL RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

This land use category occupies approximately 33 acres adjacent to Downtown Atwater. The area currently provides a mix of residential, (both one family and attached), office and retail activities.

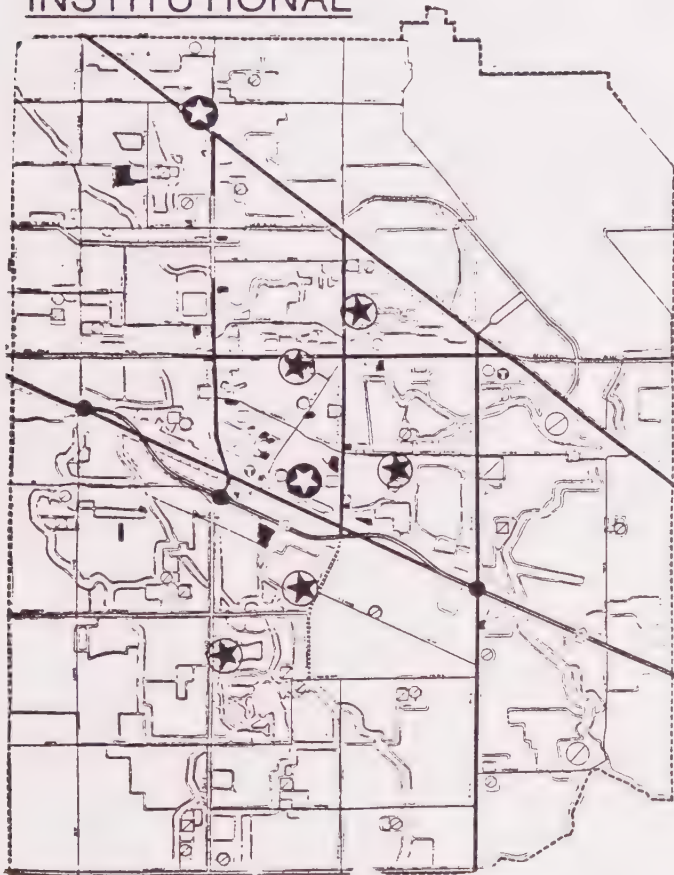
While this category is consistent in "permitted land uses" with the City's Residential Transition Zone District, it is recommended that the City pursue developing a series of development and/or design standards for this area. The mixed use concept is encouraged for this area of Atwater, but only with more performance standards than currently exist.

# Community Facilities Group

## 9. EXISTING SCHOOLS

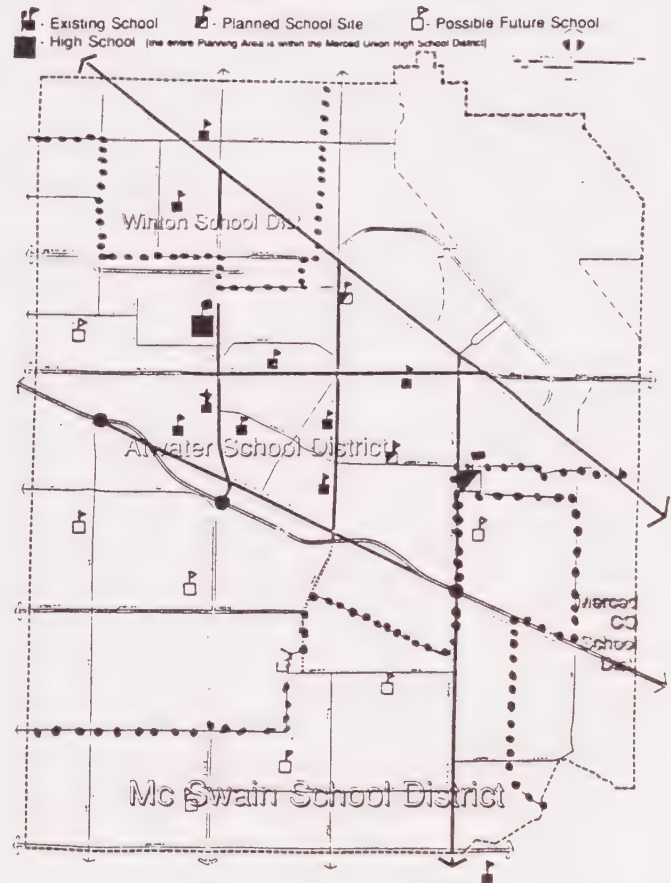
This category identifies the nine existing elementary/middle schools and high school within the Planning Area: 1] six within the Atwater School District, 2] two within the Winton School District, 3] St. Anthony's Parochial School, and 4] Atwater High School. The Mc Swain School is located southerly of highway 140 or outside the Planning Area.

### INSTITUTIONAL



- ★ Existing Fire Sta.    ● - Public/Semi-Public
- ★ Potential Fire Sta.    ● Transit Depot

### SCHOOLS



## 9-F. FUTURE SCHOOLS

The entire Planning Area falls within the Merced Union High School District. The General Plan identifies the site chosen by the District's Board of Directors as the location for a new high school - located on Avenue Two, just easterly of Buhach Road.

There are four Elementary School Districts within the Atwater Planning Area: 1] Atwater,



2] Winton, 3] Mc Swain and 4] Merced County. The eight public elementary and one parochial elementary school within the Planning Area are identified upon the General Plan.

The Plan identifies two school sites which have been approved by the Atwater School District as future school locations - 1] east of Shaffer Road below Camellia Avenue and 2] above Juniper Avenue midway between Shaffer and Buhach.

Under the category of "Possible Future School sites" the Plan identifies three locations within the Atwater School District and four locations within the Mc Swain School District. No "Possible Future School sites" are identified within the Winton School District since the decision was made within this plan to reflect the approved Winton Community Plan, (this Plan does not identify any new school sites). However it appears that at least one and possibly two new schools will be needed within the Winton School District portions of the Planning Area to accommodate future residential growth within this area.

Only a small peripheral portion of the Merced County School district falls within the Planning Area. Future residential densities are proposed to be low here and no "Future Possible School sites" are recommended.

## **10. INSTITUTIONAL**

This category includes all public and semi-public land uses which do not have their own specific category, (i.e. schools). Existing governmental buildings, hospitals, the library, sewage treatment plant, and so on constitute this designation. New facilities may be appropriate in any land use category based on need and environmental review.

### **10-F. FIRE STATION**

This category includes the existing City/County Fire Station located on Broadway, the CDF Fire Station on Winton Way above Santa Fe Drive as well as five "possible future fire station sites", two located below Freeway 99 and three located above Freeway 99.

While it is anticipated that a **maximum** of two more fire stations will be sufficient to serve the entire Planning Area, five alternatives have been identified - two of which are proposed below Freeway 99.

### **10-T. TRANSIT DEPOT**

This category identifies two potential alternative locations for a future passenger rail, inter and intracity bus depot. The designation is based upon the assumption that the frequency of passenger rail service will increase in the future. A potential location at both the Santa Fe Railroad and the Southern Pacific Railroad has been designated since future passenger service could be on either right-of way, (Amtrak currently uses the Santa Fe).

# Open Space Group

[NOTE : Maps and additional park/open space detail are located in the Open Space/ Conservation Section of this General Plan].

## **11. EXISTING PARKS**

This category includes the 80 acres currently in park usage including the City's *ballfield* and six park sites, the County Park located in Winton and Castle Park, ( currently owned and maintained by the Department of Defense).

### **11-F. FUTURE PARKS**

Numerous General Plan policies clearly articulate the General Plan Advisory Committee members desire to devote significant attention to future parkland development. The City's current ratio of parkland per 1000 residents is woefully below the State of California's recommended minimum standard.

There is no reason why the City of Atwater cannot become a *garden city* of the future if it's decision makers make park development and maintenance a priority. A commitment to parkland dedication and development requires innovation and creativity. For example parks may be dedicated "fee title" by developers to the City in return for increased densities.

## **12. LINEAR PARKS AND PATHWAYS**

Proposed is a comprehensive system of linear parks and pathways. While linear parks and pathways shall be required within new residential developments, utilization of the existing Canal system shall serve as the backbone of this open space network if older, builtup Atwater is to benefit from such a system.

## **13. COMMERCIAL RECREATION**

This category includes the existing Rancho Del Ray Golf Course as well as an 18 hole golf course proposed within the preliminary plan for Applegate Ranch, (395 acres located easterly of Applegate Road and southerly of Atwater-Jordan Road).

In addition to golf courses, the following land uses are appropriate within this category: 1) Tennis/Racket Clubs, 2) Health Clubs/Spas, 3) Equestrian Facilities, 4) Swim Clubs, Rollerskating Arenas, Archery, etc.

# Specific Plan Areas

## **14. APPLGATE BUSINESSPARK SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**

This Specific Plan Area contains 204 acres and is located on the Southwest edge of the current City Limit, adjacent to Freeway 99. In 1992 more than 75% of the Specific Plan Area was undeveloped. The Specific Plan Area lies entirely within the Atwater Redevelopment Area boundary which provides opportunities for public improvements.

The Land Use Designations within this Specific Plan Area include : 1) Business Park (more than 90% of the total land area), 2) Commercial, and 3) Linear Park, (referred to as "buffer" within the Specific Plan text).

This Designation is an **overlay** district which means that all proposed development must conform not only to the provisions of the Land Use identified upon the Future Land Use Map but also to the standards identified within the adopted Specific Plan.

[NOTE: please refer to the entire Applegate Business Park Specific Plan document, which is herein adopted as part of this General Plan by reference].

## **15. CASTLE AFB SPECIFIC PLAN AREA**

This includes the entire 2402 acres, (3.7 square miles), contained within Castle Air Force Base, "old" and "new" military base housing as well as the Air Museum site and the Base Hospital Site.

The 1991 Department of Defense decision to close the Air Base by 1995 has stimulated a City of Atwater, City of Merced and County of Merced "Joint Powers Authority", which presently has assumed the responsibility of undertaking a reuse study.

This upon completion of the reuse study by the JPA or no later than 1993, the City of Atwater should adopt a Specific Area Plan for Castle AFB. No long term, non military use should be permitted until the City of Atwater adopts a Specific Plan for this area which identifies future land uses, and a plan for providing urban services is clearly documented including an Environmental Impact Report.



## GOALS AND POLICIES

### **RESIDENTIAL GOAL - PROVIDE A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL RESIDENTS.**

#### **POLICIES:**

- Encourage a variety of housing types.
- Encourage open space, trails and recreation in new subdivisions.
- Avoid monotonous tract developments.
- Encourage neighborhood identity by providing recreation at the neighborhood level.
- Require large new subdivisions to provide linear parks.
- Provide incentives for new business in order to create employment for new residents.
- Eliminate unincorporated islands surrounded by the City.

### **COMMERCIAL GOAL - ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF A WIDE VARIETY OF GOODS AND SERVICES.**

#### **POLICIES:**

- Ensure that each neighborhood is served by convenient commercial facilities.
- Encourage the continued revitalization of Downtown Atwater.
- Downtown Atwater is the City's focal point and is the preferred location for cultural facilities.
- Identify a Regional Shopping Center site.
- Encourage mid-rise offices within one-half mile of Downtown Atwater.
- Provide older highway commercial centers with incentives to modernize.
- Support the creation of a Fire Museum within Downtown Atwater.

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES/RECREATIONAL GOAL - PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL, RECREATIONAL, MEDICAL, AND CULTURAL AMENITIES.**

#### **POLICIES:**

- Use canals as public open space corridors.
- Use utility easements as public open space corridors.
- Do not front new schools on major arterial streets.
- New residential developments shall be within 3/4 mile from a park.
- The City shall promote Commercial/Recreational activities.
- Remnant, vacant parcels of land shall be considered for park use.
- All new developments shall dedicate park land instead of fees whenever possible.
- Developer shall mitigate school impacts as provided in Government Code Section 65995.

**BUSINESS PARKS/INDUSTRIAL GOAL - PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE RESIDENTS**

**POLICIES:**

- Encourage economic growth which provides jobs for current residents.
- Elimination of the Municipal Airport shall be considered in favor of creating a labor-intensive employment center.

**URBAN FORM GOAL - CREATE A LOGICAL URBAN FORM BY ENSURING THE CONTINUED VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL USES AND DESIGNATING SEQUENTIAL URBAN TRANSITION AREAS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Annex Castle Air Force Base.
- Urban development should not occur upon incorporated territory within the Sphere of Influence.
- Urbanization should not occur beyond Atwater's Urban Expansion Boundary.
- The City shall cancel the SUDP agreement with the County of Merced and adopt the Sphere of Influence.





# **3.** **CIRCULATION**



**ATWATER GENERAL PLAN**

---



### 3. CIRCULATION

#### TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

The primary function of the circulation system in the City of Atwater, as in other cities, is to provide for the efficient and effective movement of goods, services, and persons within and through the city. In performing this function, the system responds to the local and intercity trip-making characteristics of residents and visitors. Traffic generated by local residents and businesses is increased due to traffic generation related to Castle AFB, and services required by Highway 99 traffic. A considerable volume of intercity traffic exists between Merced and Atwater.

The discussion of the City's circulation system focuses on the features that exist within the current city limits, but also includes a description of significant features outside the City but within the general planning area. The City's circulation system includes both facilities and services that are available to the public or serve the public need. Bus transit and railroad passenger and freight services are included as well as infrastructure such as roads, railroad tracks, and airport runways. Also included are bike and pedestrian paths which promote non-vehicular circulation within the community.

#### ROAD SYSTEM

A road classification system defines the relative importance of mobility (through trips) versus access (local trips) for vehicle trips on each road within the community. Through trips, in an urban context, are those that are generally one mile or more in length. To the extent possible, they are served by "arterials" (major roads) designed for moderate speeds (35-50 mph) and minimum delays. Local roads emphasize access to adjacent properties and generally serve trips one-half mile or less in length. The designated travel speed for these roads is usually 25 mph. Collectors are roads that combine the functions of mobility and access. As their name suggests, they "collect" traffic from local streets, but also provide access to abutting land, including such non-residential uses as elementary schools and parks. A fourth road classification, the freeway, has limited access and serves high speed (55 mph) intercity traffic.

The significant roads comprising the circulation system in the City of Atwater are displayed in Figure 10--showing the current functional classification for roads within the planning area based on traffic volume, road design, land uses served, and relationship to other roads. Figure 9 displays average traffic volumes for major road segments within the planning area. Traffic volumes during 1990 for more heavily travelled road segments are presented in the Appendix .



## Freeways

State Highway 99, operated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), traverses the length of the Central Valley's east side. Highway 99 crosses the Atwater planning area, dissects the far southern portion of the City itself, and runs southeast towards Merced. It is a four lane freeway which carries an average of 35,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day in the Atwater area.

Four access points to Highway 99 exist at Buhach Road, Shaffer Road, Applegate Road/Winton Way, and the westerly beginning of Atwater Boulevard. A westbound on-ramp and eastbound off-ramp at Atwater Boulevard mark the western City entrance/exit. A total of four ramps (2 each north and south, on and off) at Applegate Road/Winton Way function as the primary full-interchange access to and from the City. A single northbound off-ramp at Shaffer Road allows access to the City, and four (north and southbound, on- and off-) ramps allow traffic interchange at the eastern edge of town on Buhach Road. Two-lane overpasses exist at Applegate Road and Buhach Road, and a two-lane underpass crosses under the freeway at Shaffer Road.

The Southern Pacific Railroad line runs parallel and adjacent to Highway 99. The proximity of the tracks creates relatively complex ramp configurations for on- and off-ramp traffic.

## Arterial Roads

The City of Atwater has a well-developed arterial system that serves the periphery and center of the community. The two most heavily-travelled road segments are Winton Way between Broadway and Bellevue Road (approximately 16,000 vehicles per day), and Bellevue Road between Winton Way and Buhach Road (17,000-20,000 vehicles per day). Both streets have four through-lanes, and Bellevue Road also contains a two-way left turn (center) lane.

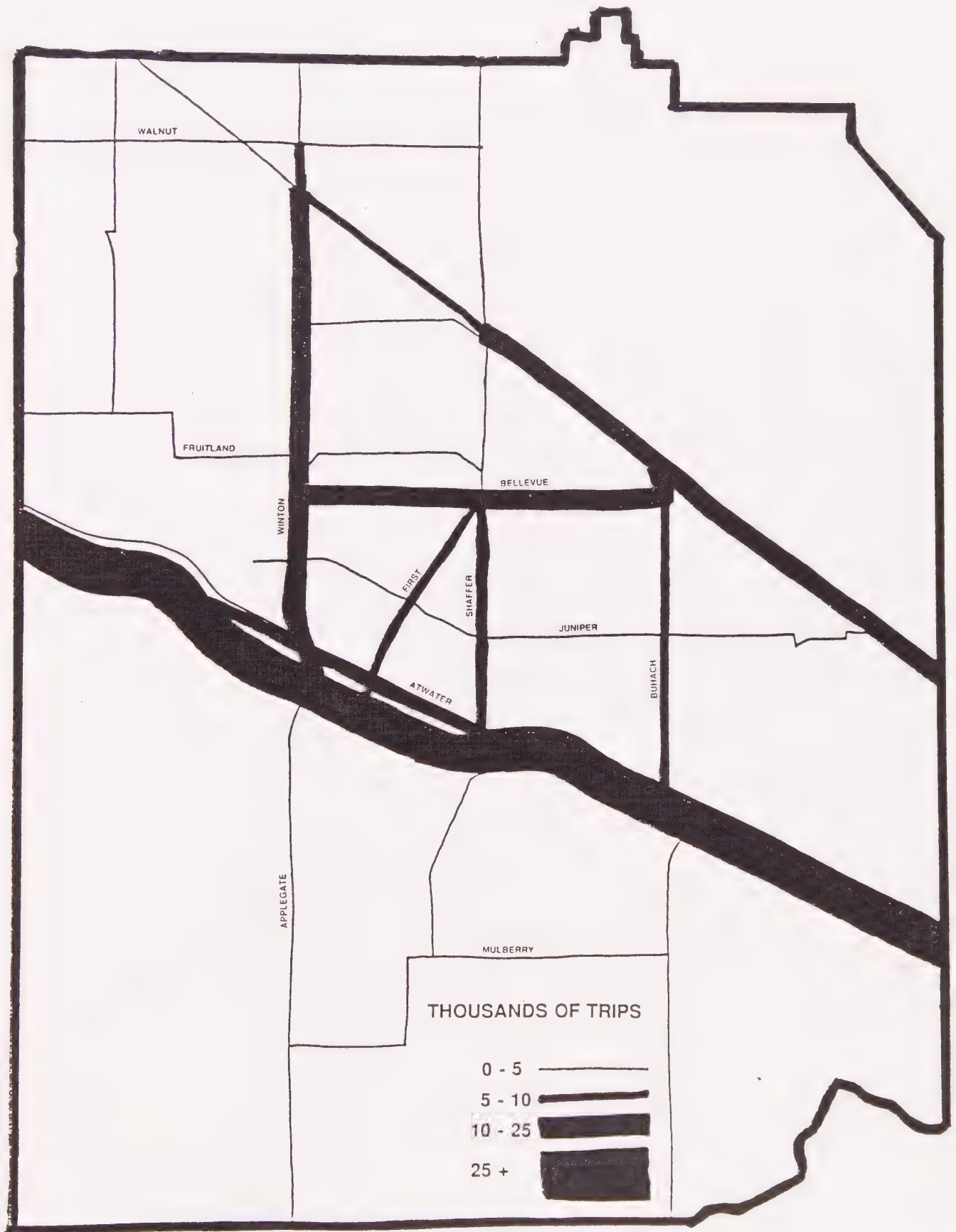
Other major arterials within the city limits include: Atwater Boulevard, which parallels Highway 99 on the south side of the downtown business district; Buhach Road, which is a major access route for traffic to and from Castle AFB; and Shaffer Road, which generally services the residential areas in the eastern and northern portions of the city and provides access to commercial and business areas on and around Bellevue Road.

Outside city limits but in the immediate Atwater area, two road segments in addition to Highway 99 have daily traffic levels exceeding 10,000 vehicles per day. Winton Way north of the city limits to Santa Fe Drive (in Winton) carries relatively heavy traffic volume between Atwater and Winton. In addition, Santa Fe Drive between Shaffer Road southeast to State Route 59 serves as a major access route to Castle AFB for workers living in the Merced area. Outside the city limits, but within the planning area, Santa Fe Drive, State Highways 59 and 140, at the eastern and southern edge of the planning area, respectively, function as arterials. While traffic on these roads is relatively light considering their status as highways, they do serve a significant percentage of intercity traffic.

Avenue Two should be straightened out and become an access road to Santa Fe Drive from the City of Atwater.

Average Daily Traffic  
Atwater Urban Expansion Area - 1988

FIGURE 9

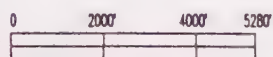


# CITY OF ATWATER CIRCULATION PLAN

## LEGEND

- EXISTING COLLECTOR
- EXISTING ARTERIAL
- == EXISTING FREEWAY
- ..... FUTURE COLLECTOR
- ..... FUTURE ARTERIAL
- ○ ○ ○ ○ FUTURE PARKWAY

- ..... TRAILS
- ++++ RAILROADS
- ATWATER CITY LIMITS



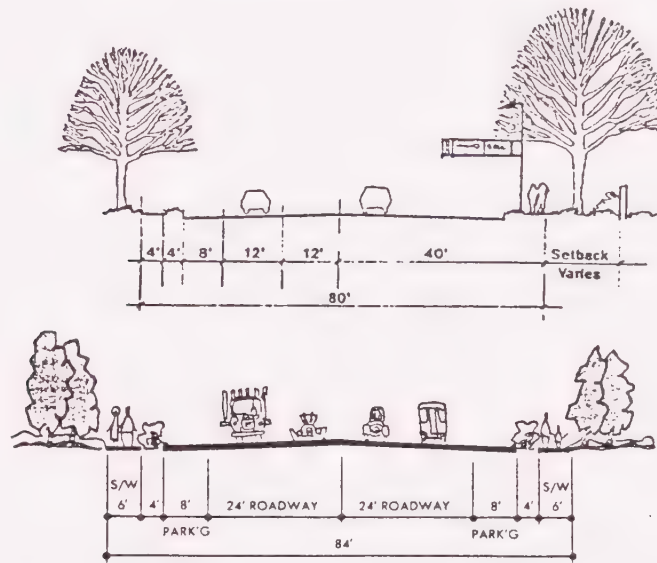
Revised : May 27, 1992



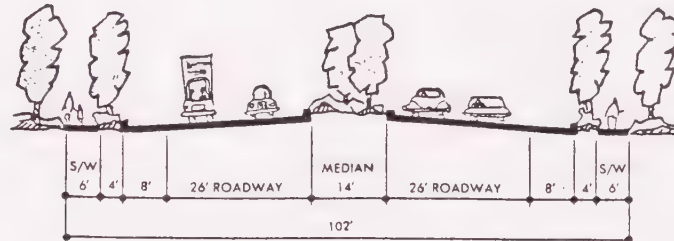


FIGURE 11  
TYPICAL ROADWAY CROSS SECTIONS

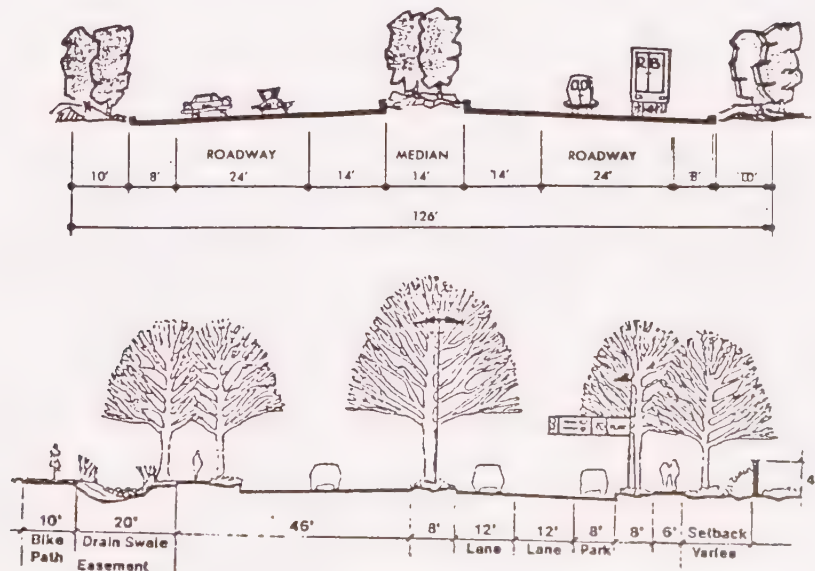
COLLECTOR OR SECONDARY STREETS / 64' - 84' ROW



ARTERIAL OR MAJOR STREETS / 80' - 102'



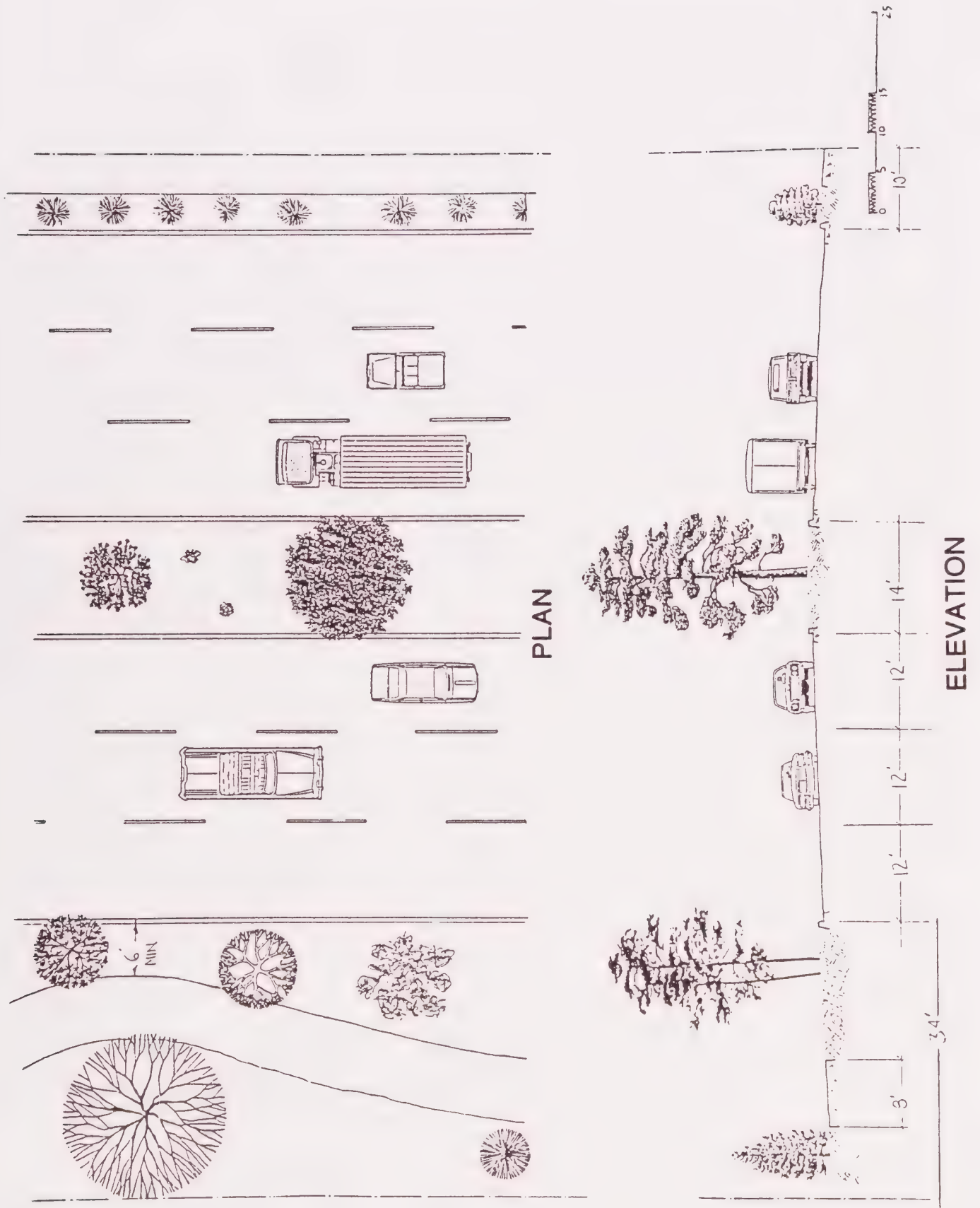
PARKWAYS / 110' - 130'



# PARKWAY

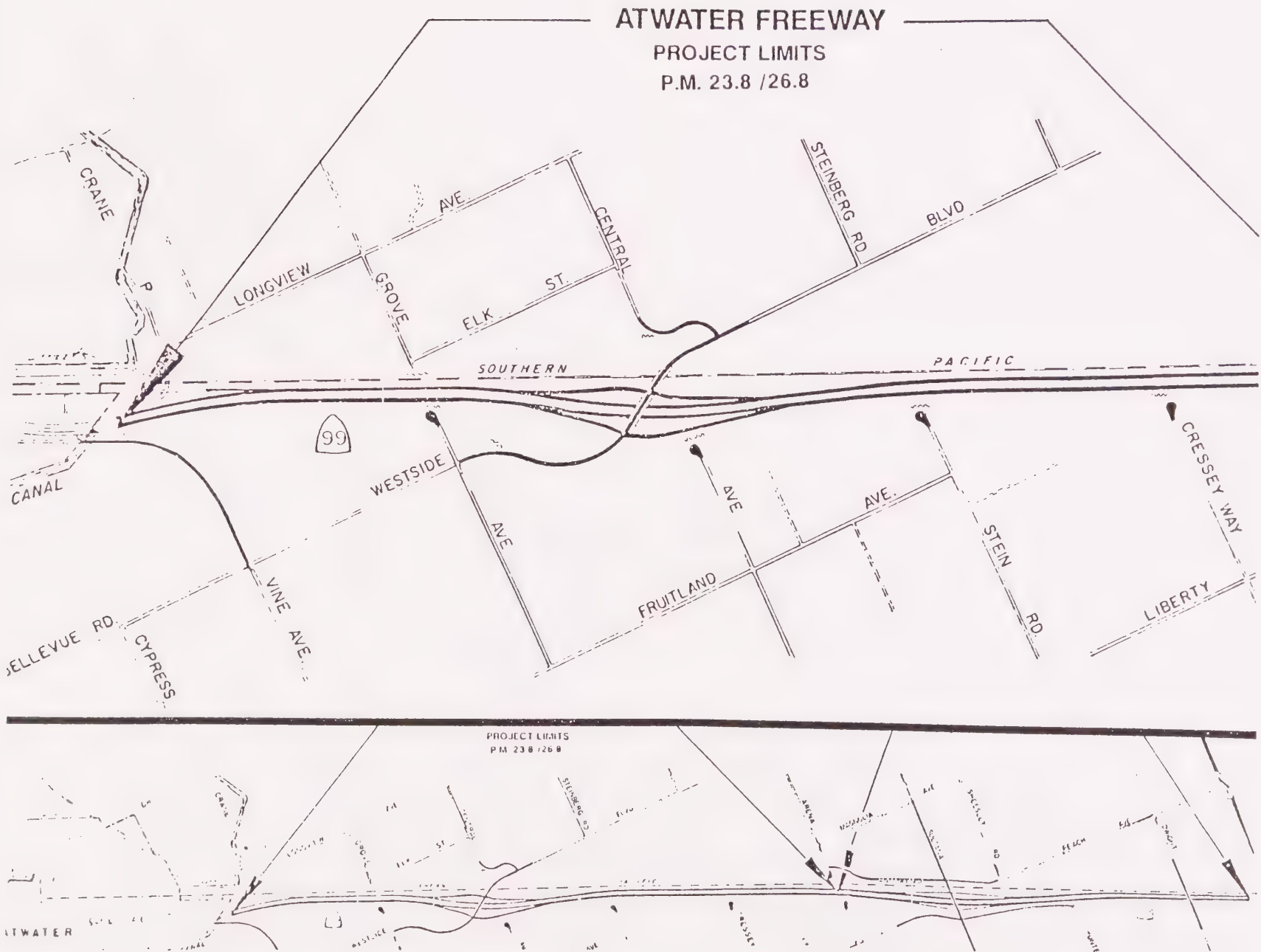
130' RIGHT OF WAY

FIGURE 12



Caltrans Plan for Freeway Upgrades - Atwater to Livingston

FIGURE 13





Three traffic signals are located on Bellevue Road (at Winton Way, Shaffer Road, and Buhach Road). A signal is also located a short distance to the north of Bellevue at Winton Way and Fruitland Avenue. Three signals exist along Santa Fe Drive at Winton Way, Buhach Road, and Castle AFB at Gate #2.

Based on existing daily counts, three road segments are nearing capacity. They include: Bellevue Road between Winton Way and Shaffer Road (20,800 vehicles/day), Buhach Road between Bellevue Road and Santa Fe Drive (16,300 vehicles/day), and Santa Fe Drive between Buhach Road and Shaffer Road (13,000 vehicles/day).

### Collectors

City collectors have design standards similar to those of local streets (40' travel surface including two lanes and roadside parking). In the urban core area, collectors include Juniper and Broadway Avenues (east-west) and First, Third, and Fifth Streets (north-south). In the outlying subdivisions and periphery of the community, Olive, Mitchell, and Fruitland Avenues also collect traffic from various local roads and allow access to arterials. Additionally, south of Highway 99, the newly-constructed Commerce Drive provides access to the airport, wastewater treatment plant, and the adjacent industrial area.

Collector roads outside the city limits which produce traffic associated with Atwater and/or Winton include: Applegate and Buhach Roads south of Highway 99, and Walnut Avenue (in Winton).

### Sidewalks, Paths, and Mid-block Crosswalks

Sidewalks exist on both sides of major streets and most local streets within the city limits. Sidewalks along roads outside city limits generally do not exist. Several mid-block crosswalks are provided on major arterials to improve access to schools.

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

### Public Transit

The Atwater area is served by two routes of the county-wide public transit system, the Merced Area Regional Transit Service (MARTS). The fixed-route, weekday-only service emphasizes intercity trips between Atwater and Merced. The existing routes travel along Santa Fe Drive and Highway 99. MARTS also offers Dial-a-Ride service to the Atwater area. The MARTS bus fleet numbers 14 vehicles (all air-conditioned and with wheelchair lifts) (MCAG, 1990).

Atwater Taxi is a private company offering 24-hour door to door service. Greyhound-Trailways provides bus passenger and small freight service to the area via Highway 99 with a station in Merced and a stop in Atwater.

The City offers subsidized 24-hour cab service, utility rates, and discount cards to both the elderly and handicapped. Additionally, housing for low and moderate income families and handicapped persons has been provided in a development (Woodhaven Subdivision) immediately west of the Aileen Colburn Elementary School through the assistance of the Atwater Redevelopment Agency. Welfare, meals, drug treatment centers, and shelter for battered women are under County management.

### Pedestrian/Bikeways

The City of Atwater General Plan (Atwater Planning Dept., May 1982) adopted certain policies to promote a citywide bikeway plan. This plan generally included a call to design a comprehensive system of bike paths which generally connect the High School and Castle AFB while coordinating an agreement with Merced Irrigation District to use easement properties along Atwater and Livingston Canals for bike/jogging paths. To date, bike paths within the City are limited and do not as yet provide connections between major trip generators. Bike lanes on Winton Way north of Juniper Avenue are discontinued south of Juniper Avenue in favor of parking.

### Railroads

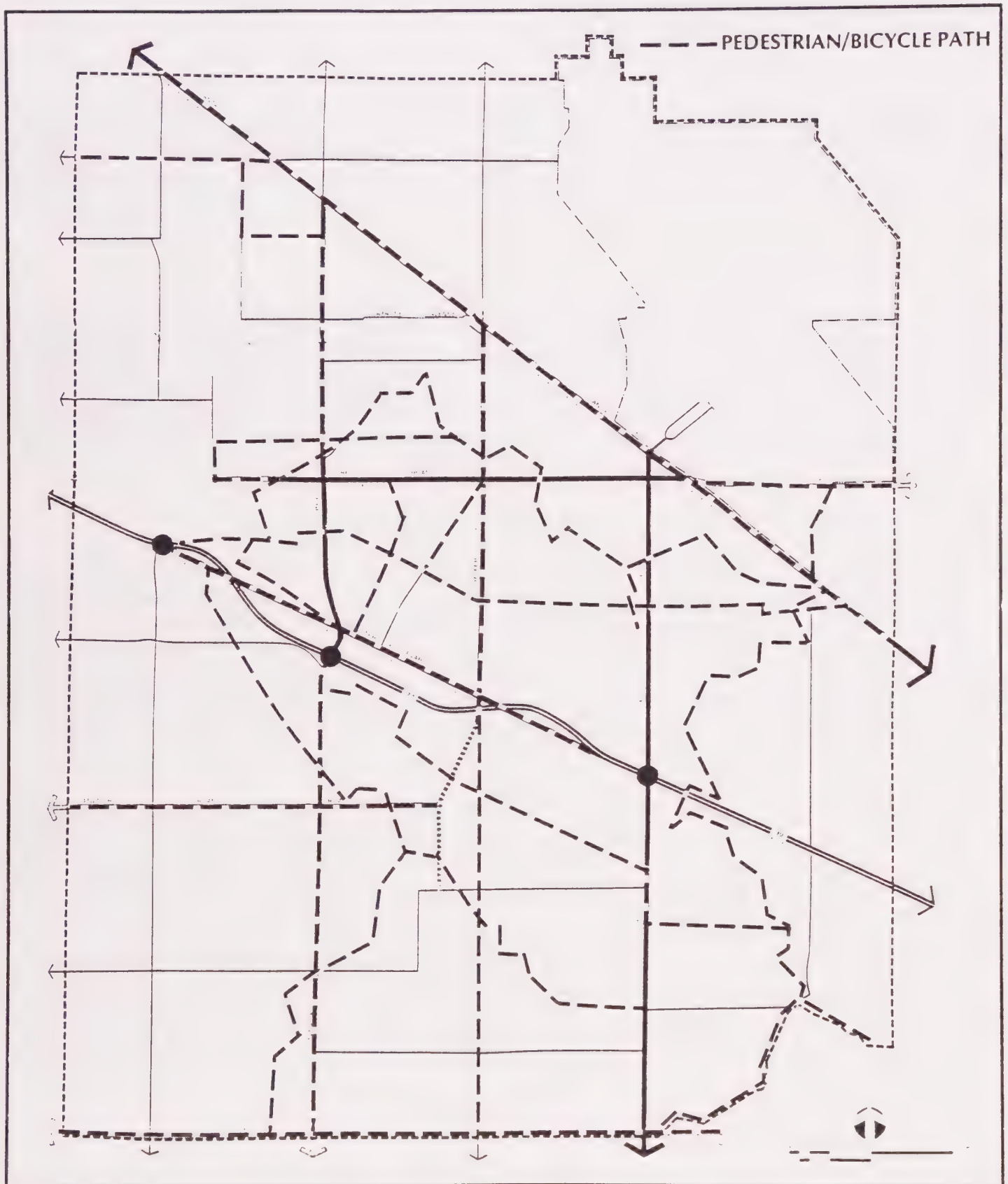
The Southern Pacific (SP) Railroad runs adjacent to Highway 99 and along and through the commercial/industrial strip south of Atwater Boulevard. According to the Atwater 1981-2001 General Plan, as of 1980, approximately 38 million tons of freight were hauled annually along the 67 miles of track in Merced County owned by Southern Pacific (Atwater City Planning Dept., May 1982). Efforts to get more current data were unsuccessful (railroad companies expressed interest in maintaining confidentiality), although it was generally assumed that rail transport has and will continue to increase due to its relative inexpense (MCAG, 1990). The most common commodities transported by rail include bulk items such as grains, vehicles, and fuels.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway Company operates a rail line which runs through the northeastern city limits adjacent to Santa Fe Drive and the entrance to Castle AFB. This line includes 43 miles of track within the county and carried approximately 19 million tons of freight annually as of 1980 (Atwater City Planning Dept., May 1982) along with Amtrak passenger trains (a station is located in Merced) at high speeds.

Railroad crossing gates have been constructed at major at-grade railroad crossings in the Atwater planning area.

The City of Atwater shall work with Amtrak and Southern Pacific to facilitate the utilization of Southern Pacific rights-of-way.

FIGURE 14  
PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE CIRCULATION





## Trucking

Along with railroads, trucking is another major transportation option. It is most common due to its speed and flexibility. However, fuel costs are a potential constraint to its viability. Atwater's location on State Highway 99 exposes the area to relatively heavy truck traffic.

## Airport

Atwater Municipal Airport is a basic utility public airport located south of Highway 99 adjacent to the sewage treatment facility. Flights from this airport are limited to small private propeller planes which are flown for recreational purposes (runway length = 2,450 ft.). Approximately 45 airplanes are currently based at the airport (a number approaching capacity). Commercial jet traffic (freight and passenger) is contributed by the Merced Airport, thereby constraining the size and function of the Atwater Airport to its current status.

## Pipelines

The Highway 99 corridor includes major gas main and crude oil pipelines. The availability of gas is important to future economic development in the community, but the pipelines otherwise have little impact on the other elements of the circulation system.

## OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

The wastewater treatment plant, which services the Atwater and Winton communities, has an expanded capacity of 6.0 MGD as of July 1991. Based on current trends and a maximum population projection scenario the wastewater treatment plant could conceivably need to service 7.0 MGD, about 1 MGD more than current capacity, before the year 2010. The current capacity should be adequate beyond 2005. Transport of sewage in Atwater is partially handled by gravity flow, but requires numerous lift stations to adequately deliver sewage to the treatment plant south of Highway 99 (See Appendix for sewer system mainlines and lift stations).

The City of Atwater obtains domestic water from groundwater wells. The Atwater total water pumping capacity is 10.8 MGD--of which 6.0 MGD was used on average in 1990 (John Haug, Atwater Public Works, Jan 1992). This leaves 4.8 MGD for potential future use assuming wells produce sufficient supplies to match this capacity (in 1989 a total of five wells were not operable due to pollution and low water table). According to projected populations the demand for water by 2010 will increase to approximately 14.0 MGD. This calls for an additional three wells. The current capacity of 10.8 MGD should be sufficient to support the population increase through the year 2000 as long as increased development does not affect water quality and recharge rates of the areas groundwater wells. However these figures do not take into account additional water capacity needed for fire flows. Appendix displays the Atwater well system and major delivery mains.

Atwater's storm drainage system was included in the Merced County Critical Area Flooding and Drainage Plan (MCCAF&DP) which planned for development through the year 2000. However, land use changes which have occurred since the study was completed could render it out of date. The MCCAF&DP includes most of the proposed SUDP, but not the entire northwest corner. The increased runoff associated with expanded development may potentially cause short-term localized flooding in areas of the city where storm drainage is inadequate during heavy periods of rainfall (John Haug, Public Works, City of Atwater). Also, the MID (January 1991) expressed a concern regarding the increased runoff generated by additional development, and the potential for periodic flooding where canal capacities are inadequate. Additionally, new regulations under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) (Section 402P, Clean Water Act) will require permits before discharging non-point surface runoff into waterways under specified circumstances. Because the MCCAF&DP doesn't cover the entire PSUDP, the limited time frame of the MCCAF&DP, and because of land use changes proposed in this general plan, a Storm Drain Master Plan for the City of Atwater needs to be prepared, or the City needs to participate in an update to the MCCAF&DP, to insure adequate drainage for future development.

Solid waste generated in Atwater is disposed of in the Merced County Landfill off State Highway 59. This site lies outside the planning area and its remaining capacity is estimated to last until 1995 (Merced County Planning Dept., June 1989). A 200 acre expansion of this facility is planned which could extend the life another 19 years (Merced County Planning Dept., June 1989). Solid waste disposal in Atwater is handled by a private contractor (BFI) (pers. comm., John Haug, Director, Atwater City Public Works Dept.).

The Highway 99 corridor includes major gas main and crude oil pipelines. The natural gas main line has an offshoot line running directly north through town beginning approximately at the intersection of Atwater Boulevard and First Street. In addition, a "product pipeline" runs diagonally across the southwestern city limits to the intersection of Buhach Road and Highway 99, where two fuel storage tanks reserve jet fuel for use at Castle AFB (the line subsequently runs north to the base east of Buhach Road). The availability of gas is important to future economic development in the community.

Major electrical transmission lines within the planning area include: one along Applegate Road/Winton Way which extends from a line south of the city to a substation northeast of Cressey; the line running south of the city near Rose and Mulberry Avenues (which turns south shortly after crossing Buhach Road); and two lines which run between Bellevue Road and Santa Fe Road southeast of Castle AFB before converging at a substation at the intersection of Shaffer and Santa Fe Roads.

Electrical and natural gas service to the City of Atwater is provided by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) primarily from fossil fuels and hydroelectric sources. The annual average per capita consumption for the Atwater area as of 1980 was 7,500 KWH of electricity and 90 cubic feet of natural gas (Atwater City Planning Dept., May 1982). Future supplies are anticipated to be adequate and no transmission problems are foreseen (pers. comm., Jerry Sanders, Service Planning Supervisor, PG&E).



## GOALS AND POLICIES

### **CIRCULATION GOAL - PROVIDE A BALANCED AND EFFICIENT CIRCULATION SYSTEM.**

#### **POLICIES:**

- The first priority to provide better circulation between Highway 99 and Castle AFB is by improving Buhach Road, including its intersection. When Buhach Road reaches capacity, a new arterial roadway to Castle AFB from the west should be given priority.
- Improve freeway access to Atwater from all approaches.
- Improve 5-way intersections for greater traffic efficiency.
- Reduce overdependence upon the automobile.
- Provide developers with incentives in return for providing pedestrian/bicycle ways.
- Build a new interchange and overcrossing at the Highway 99/Applegate Road interchange.
- Implement a system of Parkways.
- Bellevue Road will not extend to State Route 99.
- City of Atwater shall work with Amtrak and Southern Pacific to facilitate the utilization of Southern Pacific rights-of-way.





**4.**

# ***OPEN SPACE/CONSERVATION***



***ATWATER GENERAL PLAN***

---





## 4. OPENSOURCE CONSERVATION

### TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of the Atwater area is relatively level and generally slopes from north to south, east to west (such that runoff will generally flow in a southwesterly direction). The Atwater planning area lies within the San Joaquin/Merced River watershed. The elevation ranges between 145' and 160' above sea level. In the eastern near-distance, the foothills and mountains of the Sierra Nevada mountain range gradually ascend.

### GEOLOGY/SEISMICITY

The Atwater planning area comprises geologically older alluvium (silt, sand, gravel, and clay) derived from the Sierra Nevada and characterized by moderate to high permeability (Valley Planning Consultants, April 1987). These unconsolidated sediments are often saturated with water and therefore represent a potential liquefaction hazard during seismic events (Valley Planning Consultants, December 1987).

The Atwater area is distantly located from major historic faults including the San Andreas, Hayward, and Calaveras faults to the west and northwest; the White Wolf, Garlock, and Sierra Nevada faults to the south; and the Bear Mountain Fault Zone to the east. The only positively identified fault within the county is the Ortigalita Fault, which dissects the Coast Range to the west. Earthquakes occurring along the aforementioned faults have historically influenced Merced County (Merced County Planning Dept., June 1989). Additionally, numerous dormant faults potentially underlie the San Joaquin Valley, and reactivation of such a fault around the Atwater area may cause surface rupture problems.

Upon review of the geologic/seismic history of the area and consideration of the soil composition in and around Atwater, the Atwater City Planning Department (with the help of various geologists and seismologists) concluded: 1) that the Atwater area is not expected to encounter problems with tsunamis, seiches (large waves in confined waterbodies), fault creep, landslides, and surface rupture; and 2) that "considerable damage can be expected from seismic groundshaking" which could cause compaction subsidence in the form of "shakedown" in areas with deeper water tables, and liquefaction of soils in areas with shallower water tables.

### SOILS

The USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) has mapped and classified the soils in the Atwater area. Soils in the Atwater planning area are almost exclusively sandy, granitic alluvium Atwater Series soils characterized by a coarse-textured

surface soil (sand or loamy sand), deep profile, and a pale-brown subsoil. The surface soil contains a high quartz and feldspar content and very little organic matter and is highly permeable. The pale-brown subsoil often consists of heavy sandy loam or sandy clay loam at a depth of 2-4 feet and is relatively less permeable. The State Department of Conservation noted that soils of the Atwater series are highly susceptible to wind erosion (CDC, October 1990). The principal soil phases or types in the area are listed in Table 3-1. The vast majority of the soil types in and around the Atwater area are classified by the USDA SCS and CDC as "prime" farmland (CDC, October 1990). Limited areas of Atwater loamy sand (AdA) soils are classified as "farmland of statewide importance." Readers are referred to the Appendix for a map which displays farmland classifications within the Atwater planning area.

## AGRICULTURAL LAND

Of the existing 11,679 acres of agricultural land within the planning area 8,161 acres are proposed for rural agriculture land. This area would develop incrementally according to the availability of City water and sewer services, therefore preserving agricultural land by not allow out step subdivisions. Eventually however, the area will fillup in order to provide housing for projected populations.

## CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY

The Atwater area, similar to the rest of the Central Valley of California, has a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and cool, "wet" winters. The mean annual temperature is in the low 60 s F (Fahrenheit) with extremes over 100 F during the summer months and below freezing during the winter months. Mean annual rainfall is approximately 12 inches (falling primarily during the winter months).

Aircirculation patterns vary seasonally with the position and severity of the Pacific and/or Great Basin High pressure cells. In the summer months, a strong marine onshore pressure gradient may develop sending stronger up-valley winds (from the San Francisco Bay area), bringing cooler temperatures to the valley. Stagnation also may occur when the gradient is weak (reducing in-valley winds) and an inversion (warmer air over the valley) traps air in the valley. During autumn, the Pacific storm belt shifts southward (with the weakening Pacific High pressure cell) and frontal systems bringing rain traverse the valley. With the approach of winter and diminishing solar radiation, daytime surface temperatures drop, the valley thermal trough weakens, and the influx of marine air becomes negligible. Stagnation also occurs under these conditions. Winter months are characterized by mild, sunny weather with occasional storms. Depending on the strength and location of the Great Basin High pressure cell, descending winds may produce dry, bright days; or a layer of cool, damp air may be trapped in the basin, and extensive and often persistent fog may result.



The various air circulation patterns within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin (and more specifically, the Atwater area) have an understandable influence on air quality. Up-valley winds typical of summer months may import pollutants from the Bay area and Delta communities. Down-valley winds from Bakersfield and Fresno may similarly import airborne pollutants. Air inversions and stagnation may trap locally generated pollutants including smoke, dust, ozone, and smog. These conditions are most pronounced during the late spring and early fall.

Pollutant sources in the Atwater area primarily include vehicle emissions, dust, and agriculturally-associated emissions. As mentioned earlier, the soils in the area are highly susceptible to wind erosion. Wind-generated dusts (including peat dusts imported from the delta) along with agricultural activities which generate dust contribute heavily to the suspended particulate problem. Analysis of total suspended particulates within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin revealed that approximately 50% of the total suspended (airborne) particulate matter originated from the soil (Atwater City Planning Dept., May 1982). Readers are referred to the Appendix for a map displaying the San Joaquin Air Basin.

Based on data from areas throughout the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin, the air basin has been designated by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a "non-attainment area" for total suspended particulates (standards for total suspended particulates were rescinded in July 1987 and substituted with standards for 10 micron particulate matter [PM<sub>10</sub>]). This designation signifies that the area fails to meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) enumerated in the amendments to the 1977 Federal Clean Air Act, and that a plan to meet these requirements must be prepared and adopted. Similarly, requirements of the California Clean Air Act necessitate preparation of plans by the Merced County Air Pollution Control District with the intent of attaining state air quality standards by the "earliest practicable date." All non-attainment pollutants or their precursors must be reduced by five percent annually from a 1987 base year. These plans are currently being prepared by the District.

Two particulate pollutant sampling stations within Merced County are located in Los Banos and the City of Merced. The nearest gaseous pollutant monitoring site within the air basin is located in Turlock. During 1989, the Merced monitoring station detected 18 (24-hour average) air samples with suspended particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) in excess of the 50 ug/m<sup>3</sup> (micrograms per cubic meter) California Ambient Air Quality Standard (CARB, 1989). Five of these samples exceeded the 100 ug/m<sup>3</sup> National Ambient Air Quality Standard. The annual geometric mean ambient airborne PM<sub>10</sub> concentration for the Merced monitoring station in 1989 was 45.0 ug/m<sup>3</sup>--a value in excess of the state annual mean standard (CARB, 1989).



Vehicular emissions--the combustion or incomplete combustion of fossil fuels--produce hydrocarbons and nitrogen-oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) which photochemically react in the presence of heat and strong sunlight to form ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). These conditions are most severe in the late spring and early fall. The San Joaquin Air Basin has also been designated a "non-attainment area" for ozone. Since no gaseous pollutant monitoring stations exist in the county, data which can be used as reference for the specific Atwater area are unavailable .

Carbon monoxide (CO) is another byproduct of fossil-fuel combustion. During frequent strong air inversions which occur between early fall and early winter, carbon monoxide levels rise and occasionally exceed the Federal standard. High NO<sub>x</sub> levels are also recorded during these periods. Since no gaseous pollutant monitoring stations exist in the county, data which can be used as reference for the specific Atwater area are unavailable.

The major oxidant contributors in the Atwater area include automobile and aircraft emissions from Castle AFB. Given the conditions prevalent in the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin which can capture and store air pollutants for extended periods, the increased emissions generally associated with additional development would detrimentally contribute to the photochemical smog problem in the area.

## SURFACE WATER

Major irrigation canals and natural waterways within the Atwater planning area include: Livingston and Atwater Canals, which generally parallel the northern and western city limits, respectively; Escaladian Canal in the northern portion of the planning area; and Canal Creek, which runs east of Castle AFB (and is the sole source tributary for Livingston and Atwater Canals). Black Rascal and Bear Creeks cross the far southeastern section of the planning area. The Merced River forms the northwestern boundary of the planning area. The Merced Irrigation District (MID) diverts water from the Merced River via Main Canal into Canal Creek and subsequently, to Livingston and Atwater Canals for agricultural uses. Readers

are referred to Figure 8 for a map portraying major waterways within the planning area.

## DRAINAGE AND FLOODING

Most of the City of Atwater and much of the planning area are located outside of the 100-year flood plain designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The area to the east of Atwater (east of Buhach Road and south of Bellevue Road largely between the cities of Atwater and Merced) is the only affected region within the Atwater planning area. Readers are referred to the Appendix for a map depicting the 100-year flood plain.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently accepting bids for construction of an earthen "dry dam" on Canal Creek (east of Buhach Road at Eucalyptus Avenue) which will serve as a flood control dam to temporarily capture, and then gradually release excess storm runoff in the creek. The planned construction of Castle Dam (and Reservoir) immediately northeast of Castle AFB (see Figure 4) would provide additional flood protection to certain areas located southeast of Castle AFB which are currently susceptible during a 50-year or greater flood (US Army Corps, March 1980). However, much of the benefit of this project is associated with its contribution to the larger Merced County Streams flood control plan designed to protect the Merced and lower reach Bear Creek areas from 100-year and greater floods.

Atwater storm drainage is routed into Merced Irrigation District (MID) irrigation canals, and Parreira and Atwater Drains (see Figure 4) via drain lines. The MID (January 1991) expressed a concern regarding the increased runoff generated by additional development, and the potential for periodic flooding where canal capacities are inadequate. Additionally, new regulations under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) (Section 402P, Clean Water Act) will require permits before discharging non-point surface runoff into waterways under specified circumstances.

The Atwater City Planning Department (May 1982) concluded that storm drainage is one of the city's largest problems. Atwater's storm drainage system was not designed to accommodate rapid growth and development. The increased runoff associated with expanded development may potentially cause short-term localized flooding in areas of the city where storm drainage is inadequate during heavy periods of rainfall. An example of such an area includes the Atwater civic center itself (pers. comm., John Haug, Director, Atwater City Public Works.) Figure 6 displays the Atwater storm drainage system including pumping stations and major drain lines.

## WATER QUALITY

The water quality in the upper reaches of the Merced River and other east-side (Sierran) waterways is very high but progressively decreases as the waterways enter and flow through the valley due to the inflow of excess irrigation tailwaters. This pattern is generally mirrored in groundwater quality (Merced County Planning Dept., June 1989).

The Merced County Planning Department (June 1989) has noted the following groundwater quality problems in the Atwater area: Nitrate, Dibromochloropropane (DBCP), Ethylene Dibromide (EDB), Trichloroethylene (TCE), 1,1 Dichloroethylene, and 1,2 Dichloroethane pollution for the Atwater-Winton general community; and



general pesticide contamination of shallow wells northwest of Atwater.

Nitrogen (nitrate) pollution problems are attributed to fertilizers, animal manures, treated and untreated sewage, geologic sources, and plant residues. DBCP is a pesticide used to control soil nematodes which was heavily used by area farmers but was outlawed in 1977 when it was identified as a carcinogen (cancer-causing agent). Pollution of shallow wells from this chemical is widespread. Past disposal practices at Castle AFB have contaminated local groundwater with Trichloroethylene (TCE), 1,2-Dichloroethane (1,2-DCA), 1,2-Dichloroethylene (1,2-DCE), Tetrachlorethylene (PCE), Carbon Tetrachloride, Benzene, Methylene Chloride, Dibromochloromethane, and Chloroform among others. Readers are referred to Figure 7 for a map displaying the three pollutant plumes underlying the Castle AFB area. In 1989, the USAF signed an interagency agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California Department of Health Services (CDHS) which outlined a work program and initiated scheduling of the cleanup process. After much time and expense, the Air Force and its contractors have selected two cleanup options for the main TCE plume (MTP) which involve air-stripping the polluted groundwater, either incinerating or carbon-filtering the emissions, groundwater reinjection, and in-situ biological remediation. The Air Force expects the cleanup using either methodology to take ten years.

The City of Atwater obtains domestic drinking water from groundwater wells. The City of Atwater Public Works Water Department (1989) conducted water quality analyses for samples taken from the City's groundwater wells. Samples were analyzed for trace elements and minerals, organic chemicals, clarity, and bacterial pollution. Mean contaminant concentrations from data for operating wells were, in all cases, well below Federal and State public health standards. Specific water quality data are enumerated in the document, which is appended to this section. Discussion with City staff revealed that although some wells occasionally exceed drinking water standards (notably for DBCP and EDB), the problem is not localized such that any one of the operating wells is characteristically worse than any other (pers. comm., Bill Swalley, Atwater Public Works Water Dept.). In 1989, four wells were discontinued due to concerns over water quality. One well was also inoperative due to a low water table. This left six operative wells available to supply City needs (Atwater Public Works Water Dept., 1989). The City continues to monitor wells on a periodic basis to ensure protection of public health.

## VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

In contrast to other areas within Merced County, the immediate Atwater-Winton area has relatively few documented natural wetland or wildlife resources. Although at least 27 listed endangered or threatened plant and wildlife species have been found in the County, their occurrence is generally concentrated in the central and western portions. The California Department of Fish & Game



(CDFG) Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) lists a single occurrence of Northern Hardpan Vernal Pool in the area east of Buhach Road immediately north of Castle AFB. An occurrence of Merced Monardella (*Monardella leucocephala*) (Federal Candidate 1 for listing) has been mapped within the planning area between Atwater and Merced; however, the specific location has not been pinpointed. No documented sightings of threatened or endangered wildlife species exist for the Atwater area.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (March 1980) documented "substantial stands" of riparian vegetation along Canal Creek. Inspection of aerial photography confirms this occurrence, along with similar habitat along the Merced River and Jones Drain in the far northern reaches of the planning area.

National Wetlands Inventory maps have catalogued relatively few remaining natural wetland habitats within the planning area. Of note are those in the Merced River/Jones Drain area, along with an expanse of palustrine, seasonally flooded, (emergent vegetation) wetland located south of the intersection of Atwater-Jordan Road and Central Avenue (in the southwestern portion of the planning area). Readers are referred to Figure 8 for a map illustrating natural wetland areas within the Atwater planning area.

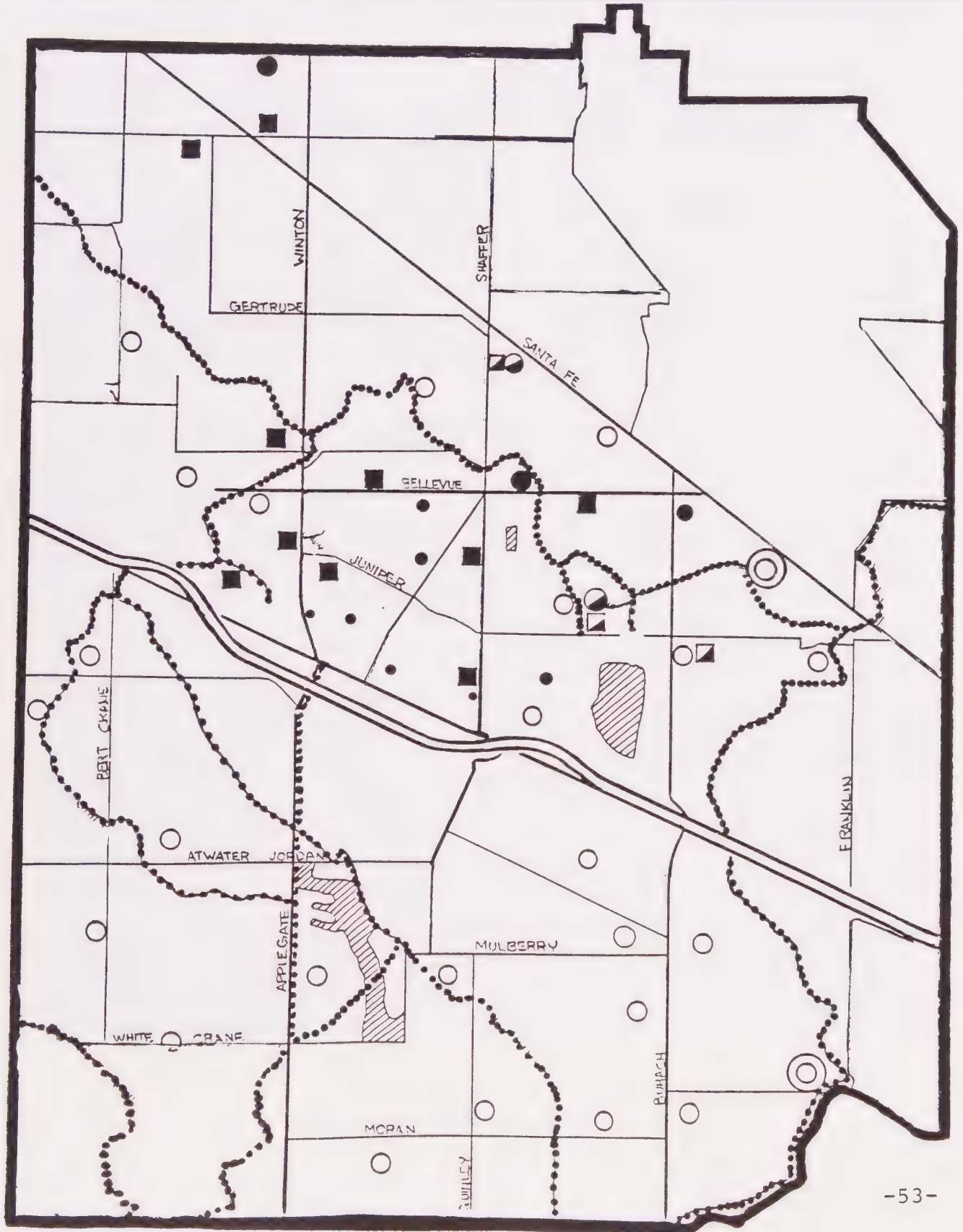
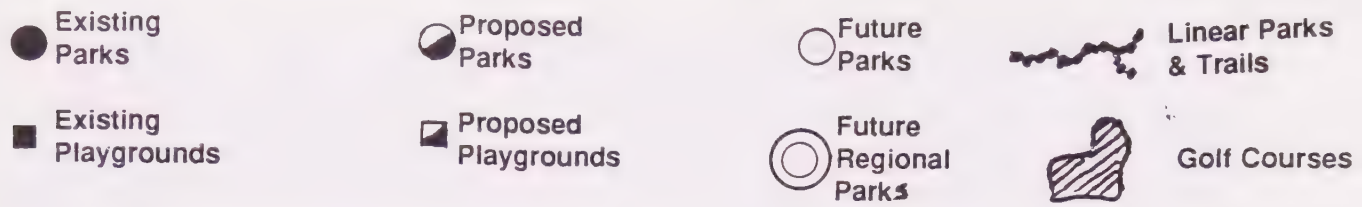
While only one extant vernal pool is documented within the planning area, such unique areas in the Atwater vicinity are potential habitat for endangered species which may include San Joaquin Valley Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia inequalis*), Hairy Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia pilosa*), and Succulent Owls Clover (*Orthocarpus campestris* var. *succulentus*). Additionally, the Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard (*Crotaphytus silus*), a Federal and State endangered species, may inhabit sparsely vegetated plains or grasslands in the area, although none have been sited to date.

## RECREATION & PARKS

The larger parks in the area include the 15 acre municipal Osborn Park, located off Bellevue Road, and Castle Park at the intersection of Bellevue and Buhach Roads. Osborn Park contains baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, and picnic areas. Castle Park is a military facility containing a picnic area open to the public during working hours. The Rancho Del Rey Golf Course is a private facility located southeast of the city which offers additional recreational opportunities. Smaller urban parks are located near the hospital, the water tower (with another ball park), and near the intersection of First Street and Linden Avenue. A five-acre park facility located within a newer subdivision east of Shaffer Road functions as a soccer field and storm water detention basin. Discussion with the Atwater Parks and Recreation Department has revealed that this project (while theoretically attractive) has proven unwise in practice--leaving the park closed for long periods of time due to flooding (comm., Jack Schaefer, Director, Atwater Parks and Recreation Dept.).

# Park / Open Space Plan

FIGURE 15





The City of Atwater Parks and Recreation Department offers a multitude of activities including: bowling, tennis, swimming, baseball/t-ball/softball, basketball, aerobics/jazzercise, flag-football, martial arts, dog obedience, arts and crafts, and hunter safety, among others. Senior activities and programs include, but are not limited to: exercise and oil painting classes; legal, tax-assistance, health insurance counseling and advocacy; Gold Card services; and social clubs including the Atwater Senior Social Club (ASSC) and Atwater Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

## SCENIC RESOURCES

The Atwater area in general is largely devoted to agricultural uses. As such, the open space areas associated with this specific land use offer additional benefits as scenic resources.

The following transportation routes have been designated scenic corridors (based on criteria listed in the City of Atwater General Plan, 1981-2001): Atwater Boulevard, First Street, Bellevue Road, Shaffer Road, Winton Way, Broadway Avenue from Winton Way to First Street, Buhach Road, Third Street, part of Grove Avenue, and all entrances to the City. City policy aims to protect and beautify these streets with specific policies regulating signs, utility lines, land use, and other activities which would detract from the aesthetic value of these corridors; and by encouraging actions such as landscaping, maintenance, and architectural design which enhance their scenic value.

## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

As mentioned earlier, the Atwater planning area is within the historic range of the Yokuts. Only a small fraction of Merced County has been surveyed for archaeological or historic cultural resources. These areas are often located near natural waterbodies (present and historic rivers, springs, or ponds) and on elevated grounds (ridges or knolls). Potential archaeological sites include: housepits, round houses (ceremonial), sweathouses, storage structures, cemeteries, isolated burials, quarries, and petroglyph (rock carving) and pictograph (rock painting) sites.

Places of contemporary historical significance in the Atwater City Limits include the Bloss Mansion, Bloss Library, and Castle Air Museum. George Bloss Jr. was the husband of one of the Mitchell heiresses. The Bloss family played a key role in Atwater history and contributed many things to the community including a hospital, high school scholarships, as well as the library and mansion. The Castle Air Museum houses historic aircraft and remodeled World War II barracks and represents a significant tourist attraction in the Atwater area (bringing some 120,000 visitors annually).



## GOAL AND POLICIES

**OPEN SPACE GOAL - PROVIDE A DYNAMIC PARK SYSTEM WITH A VARIETY OF PASSIVE AND ACTIVE RECREATION.**

### POLICIES:

- Provide recreation space for all population groups.
- Develop a network of jogging and hiking trails.
- Place future parks in areas linking residences to employment.
- Financial responsibility for park expansion shall be placed with developers proportionate with the size of development.
- Provide for park system maintenance through assessment districts.
- Work with regional and other local agencies to develop a Regional Park nearby.
- Develop parks in areas with an existing shortage.
- Acquire and/or accept land adjacent to canals for linear parks.
- Acquire or reserve significant open space land which is in the path of development.
- Acquire or accept dedication of parkland adjacent to school sites.
- Require land in lieu of cash for park dedication when practical.
- Ensure that recreational programs serve all segments of the population.
- Utilize MID, PG&E, and railroad rights-of-way for a trail network.
- Develop mini-parks where practical.
- Ensure neighborhood accessibility to park land.
- Promote joint use of parks with school sites.

# **5. GOALS & POLICIES**



**ATWATER GENERAL PLAN**

---





## GOALS AND POLICIES

It is important to understand the meaning of goals and policies, as well as their relationship to each other. Too often, communities set goals that are so vague that the articulation of meaningful policies becomes impossible or they formulate policies in the absence of goals. Either extreme hinders the process of community planning and development.

If several people were asked to explain the words "goal" and "policy," it is likely that each would respond with a similar but different interpretation. The best definitions may never be found, but from a survey of goal-setting projects, the following seem to be reasonable.

**GOAL: The end result toward which efforts are directed.**

A goal may be long-term, short-term, neighborhood, area or regional, primary or secondary, major or minor, but the term is almost always used as an expression of an ultimate ideal to be achieved.

**POLICY: A definite course of action to guide present and future decisions.**

Policies are elements of a goal, and the accomplishment of a policy constitutes partial fulfillment of a goal. Policies are more often quantified and set down for achievement within a given time period.

1. GOAL: Residential It is the goal of the City of Atwater to provide for and maintain a safe, attractive, and desirable living environment for all residents of the community.  
  
POLICIES: 1a) Encourage the development of a broad range and variety of single and multiple-family dwelling unit types which will complement existing land use and meet the housing needs of:
  - \* Families of varying sizes, incomes, and age groups; and,
  - \* Persons expected to be employed in the community as a result of industrial and commercial growth.  
1b) Clustering and other innovative land use techniques will be encouraged in order to provide park, trail, and recreational amenities within new residential subdivisions.

- 1c) Flexibility will be encouraged in order to avoid the typical stereotype block development as found in flat residential neighborhoods. Planned unit developments will be encouraged in order to consider densities and impacts for a broad area, rather than on the traditional tract-by-tract basis.
- 1d) Open space and natural resources will be provided which encourage neighborhood identity and which provide recreation and leisure opportunities.
- 1e) Linear parks will be required within all residential subdivisions which contain 20 or more acres.
- 1f) Provide incentives to stimulate the development of new businesses.
- 1g) Eliminate all county islands surrounded by the City.

2. GOAL: Commercial It is the goal of the City of Atwater to ensure that a wide variety of goods and services are available.

- POLICIES:
- 2a) Ensure that each neighborhood is served by limited commercial facilities which are convenient and accessible to pedestrian traffic.
  - 2b) Encourage the continued revitalization of Downtown Atwater.
  - 2c) Downtown Atwater is determined to be the City's focal point and, as such, should be the preferred location for cultural facilities.
  - 2d) Identify a site large enough to incorporate regional commercial activities which serve both Atwater and area-wide residents.
  - 2e) Encourage mid-rise office facilities to locate within one-half mile of Downtown Atwater.
  - 2f) Provide incentives to older, strip shopping areas to make facade, signage, and landscaping improvements.
  - 2g) Support the proposed Fire Museum within Downtown Atwater.

3. GOAL: Institutional/Recreational

It is the goal of the City of Atwater to provide a wide range of educational, recreational, medical, and cultural opportunities and facilities for all residents.

- POLICIES:
- 3a) Use waterways as public open space corridors.
  - 3b) Use utility rights-of-way and easements as public open space corridors.
  - 3c) New schools shall not front on major streets.
  - 3d) New residential developments shall be within 3/4 mile from a park.
  - 3e) Commercial recreational activities shall be promoted within the City.
  - 3f) Utilize remnant parcels as open space or park land.
  - 3g) All new residential developments shall include the dedication of open space land in lieu of park fees whenever practical, as determined by the City Council.
  - 3h) Developer shall mitigate school impacts as provided in Government Code Section 65995.

4. GOAL: Business Parks/Industrial

It is the goal of the City of Atwater to provide a wide range of employment opportunities for existing and future residents.

- POLICIES:
- 4a) Encourage economic growth which supplies jobs for existing residents.
  - 4b) The City of Atwater shall pursue forming an Enterprise Zone and assist its implementation by considering the Municipal Airport as a site for job-producing activities.
  - 4c) Employment intensive activities will be given priority over seasonal or low-intensity employment land uses.



5. GOAL: Urban Form

It is the goal of the City of Atwater to create a logical urban form by ensuring the continued viability of agricultural uses and by designating sequential, rational transition areas for future urban uses within the Planning Area.

- POLICIES:
- 5a) The City of Atwater shall pursue every avenue to annex Castle Air Force Base.
  - 5b) Residential subdivisions should not occur within the Planning Areas's unincorporated territory.
  - 5c) Urbanization should not occur beyond the City's Urban Expansion boundaries.
  - 5d) A permanent greenbelt should be established which shall include all land within the City's Planning Area which is outside the Urban Expansion Area.
  - 5e) The Urban Expansion Area shall be submitted to the Local Agency Formation Commission for adoption as the Atwater Sphere of Influence.
  - 5f) The City of Atwater shall cancel the SUDP agreement with the County of Merced and adopt the proposed Sphere of Influence.
  - 5g) Growth should be to the south and northeast.

6. GOAL: Circulation

It is the goal of the City of Atwater to provide a balanced and efficient circulation system.

- POLICIES:
- 6a) Improve Buhach Road from State Route 99 north to Castle Air Force Base to arterial road status, including a full interchange at S.R. 99 as the first priority to provide improved access to Castle AFB. When Buhach Road approaches capacity, priority should be given to provide a new arterial road to Castle Air Force Base from the west.
  - 6b) Improve freeway access to Atwater from all approaches.
  - 6c) Improve the 5-way intersection (Shaffer Road and Bellevue

Road) to allow more efficient traffic movement.

- 6d) Develop programs which will reduce over-dependence on the use of the automobile.
- 6e) Create incentives to developers in return for providing pedestrian/bicycle transportation systems.
- 6f) Build a new interchange at Applegate Road and Freeway 99, including the widening of the Applegate Road overcrossing.
- 6g) Implement the Parkway System, as identified on the Roadway Circulation Plan Map, or other suitable alignment.
- 6h) Bellevue Road will not be extended to State Route 99.

7. GOAL: Open Space

It is the goal of the City of Atwater to create a dynamic park system providing all residents a variety of active and passive leisure opportunities.

- POLICIES:
- 7a) Provide recreation space in adequate amounts and of suitable types for the population mix.
  - 7b) Provide for development of a network of jogging and bicycle paths.
  - 7c) Place future parks in accessible areas with emphasis placed on linear parks linking neighborhoods and workplaces with paths and trails.
  - 7d) Financial responsibility for park system expansion should be placed with developers, proportionate to the size or density of development.
  - 7e) Provide for park system maintenance through establishment of assessment districts, or other means, not to include use of General Funds.
  - 7f) Work with regional and other local agencies to develop a regional park nearby.
  - 7g) Prioritize park development in areas where severe shortfalls exist.

- 7h) Acquire land adjacent to or accept the dedication of canals for linear parks.
- 7i) Acquire or reserve land in the path of proposed development.
- 7j) Acquire or accept the dedication of park sites adjacent to existing and proposed schools.
- 7k) Require land as opposed to cash in lieu fees for park dedication when practical, as determined by the City Council.
- 7l) Ensure that recreation programs serve all segments of the population.
- 7m) Utilize existing M.I.D., PG & E, and railroad rights-of-way for a trail network.
- 7n) Develop "strip parks," as opposed to square or rectangular parks, where possible.
- 7o) Develop mini-parks where practical.
- 7p) Ensure neighborhood accessibility to park land by opening cul-de-sacs and long streets to through pedestrian access.
- 7q) Encourage the joint usage of City parks and school sites.



# GOALS & POLICIES

Following is an abbreviated summary of the proposed General Plan Goals and Policies as recommended by the General Plan Advisory Committee:

## **1. RESIDENTIAL GOAL - PROVIDE A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL RESIDENTS**

### **POLICIES**

- Encourage a variety of housing types
  - Encourage open space, trails & recreation in new subdivisions
  - Avoid monotonous tract developments
  - Encourage neighborhood identity by providing recreation at the neighborhood level
  - Require large new subdivisions to provide linear parks
  - Provide incentives for new businesses in order to create employment for new residents
  - Eliminate unincorporated islands surrounded by the City
- 

## **2. COMMERCIAL GOAL - ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF A WIDE VARIETY OF GOODS AND SERVICES**

### **POLICIES**

- Ensure that each neighborhood is served by convenient commercial facilities
  - Encourage the continued revitalization of Downtown Atwater
  - Downtown Atwater is the City's focal point and is the preferred location for cultural facilities
  - Identify a Regional Shopping Center site
  - Encourage mid-rise offices within one-half mile of Downtown Atwater
  - Provide older highway commercial centers with incentives to modernize
  - Support the creation of a Fire Museum within Downtown Atwater
- 

## **3. COMMUNITY FACILITIES/RECREATIONAL GOAL - PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF EDUCATIONAL, RECREATIONAL, MEDICAL, & CULTURAL AMENITIES**

### **POLICIES**

- Use canals as public open space corridors
  - Use Utility easements as public open space corridors
  - New schools shall not front on major streets.
  - New residential subdivisions shall be within 3/4 mile from a park
  - The City shall promote Commercial/Recreational activities
  - Remnant, vacant parcels of land shall be considered for park use
  - All new developments shall dedicate park land instead of fees whenever possible
  - Developer shall mitigate school impacts as provided in Government Code Section 65995.
- 

## **4. BUSINESS PARKS/INDUSTRIAL GOAL - PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE RESIDENTS**

### **POLICIES**

- Encourage economic growth which provides jobs for current residents

- Elimination of the Municipal Airport shall be considered in favor of creating a labor intensive employment center
- 

**5. URBAN FORM GOAL - CREATE A LOGICAL URBAN FORM BY ENSURING THE CONTINUED VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL USES & DESIGNATING SEQUENTIAL URBAN TRANSITION AREAS**

**POLICIES**

- Annex Castle Air Force Base
  - Urban development should not occur upon incorporated territory within the Sphere of Influence
  - Urbanization should not occur beyond Atwater's Urban Expansion Boundary
  - The City shall cancel the SUDP agreement with the County of Merced and adopt the Sphere of Influence
- 

**6. CIRCULATION GOAL - PROVIDE A BALANCED & EFFICIENT CIRCULATION SYSTEM**

**POLICIES**

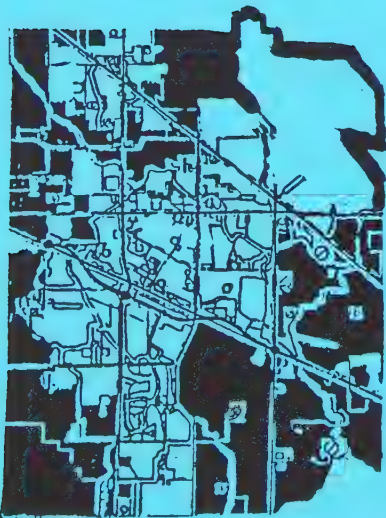
- The first priority to provide better circulation between Hwy 99 and Castle AFB is by improving Buhach Road including its intersection, when Buhach Rd. reaches capacity, a new arterial roadway to Castle AFB from the west should be given priority
  - Improve freeway access to Atwater from all approaches
  - Improve 5-way intersection for greater traffic efficiency
  - Reduce overdependence upon the automobile
  - Provide developers with incentives in return for providing pedestrian/bicycle ways
  - Build a new interchange and overcrossing at the Hwy 99 - Applegate Road interchange
  - Implement a system of Parkways
  - Bellevue Road will not extend to State Route 99
- 

**7. OPEN SPACE GOAL - PROVIDE A DYNAMIC PARK SYSTEM WITH A VARIETY OF PASSIVE & ACTIVE RECREATION**

**POLICIES**

- Provide recreation space for all population groups
- Develop a network of jogging & hiking trails
- Place future parks in areas linking residences to employment
- Financial responsibility for park expansion shall be placed with developers proportionate with the size of development
- Provide for park system maintenance through assessment districts
- Work with regional and other local agencies to develop a Regional Park nearby
- Develop parks in areas with an existing shortage
- Acquire and/or accept land adjacent to canals for linear parks
- Acquire or reserve significant open space land which is in the path of development
- Acquire or accept dedication of parkland adjacent to school sites
- Require land in lieu of cash for park dedication when practicle
- Ensure that recreational programs serve all segments of the population
- Utilize MID, PG&E, and railroad rights-of-way for a trail network,
- Develop mini-parks where practicle
- Ensure neighborhood accessibility to park land

# **6.** ***PHASED DEVELOPMENT***



***ATWATER GENERAL PLAN***

---





## 6. PHASED DEVELOPMENT

### PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND

The most notable comments received from public agencies resulting from the Draft General Plan Update and Draft EIR review process centered around the loss of prime agricultural land which would result from the implementation of this document.

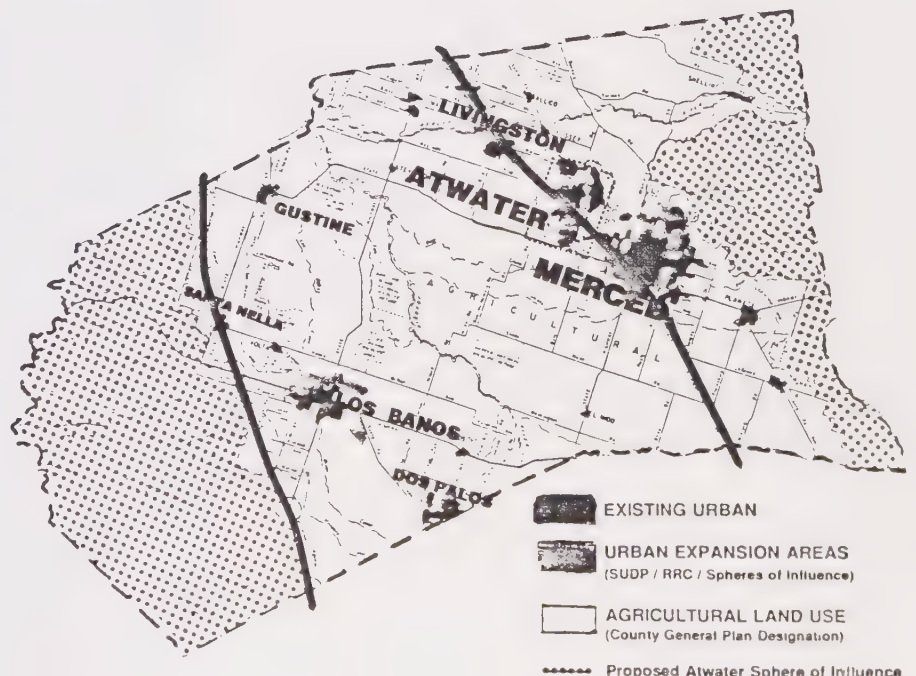
The City of Atwater recognizes the significance of agriculture to the local economy. The County of Merced should be commended for its' stated General Plan intention to *preserve prime agricultural land*. But like *motherhood or apple pie*, the problem with this "all-encompassing", "sacred" policy is that, in the absence of clearly designated agricultural preserves, this well meaning objective represents little more than a well meaning objective.

In reality, prime agricultural land is urbanized daily in Merced County. Thus, converting *some* prime agricultural land is deemed to be in the *public interest*. Approving development on prime agricultural land under a case by case evaluation system is not only prone to subjectivity but, more importantly, contrary to the objectives of General Plans as legislated by the State of California.

The land use decision to *preserve prime agricultural land* must be a collective, regional decision agreed to by the County Board of Supervisors as well as the City Councils from Merced County's six cities. What good would it do for the City of Atwater to reject urbanization proposed upon prime agricultural land if the County goes ahead and approves residential subdivisions in the McSwain Area? In fact, such "good intentions" by the City of Atwater would be counterproductive because a typical subdivision within this City yields 4.5 more units per acre than one approved in the McSwain area.

The land use policies necessary to accomodate the growth anticipated by Merced County during the next 20 years is inconsistent with the map on the right. Only the community of Santa Nella and the City of Los Banos appear to have sufficient expansion areas for the population projected for 2010.

Viewed comprehensively, Atwater's proposed Sphere of Influence, or *ultimate urban service area*, facilitates the preservation of prime agricultural land.



### PROGRAM FOR PHASED DEVELOPMENT

Figure 16 illustrates a program for phased development. Directing future urbanization toward



# PHASED DEVELOPMENT POLICY MAP

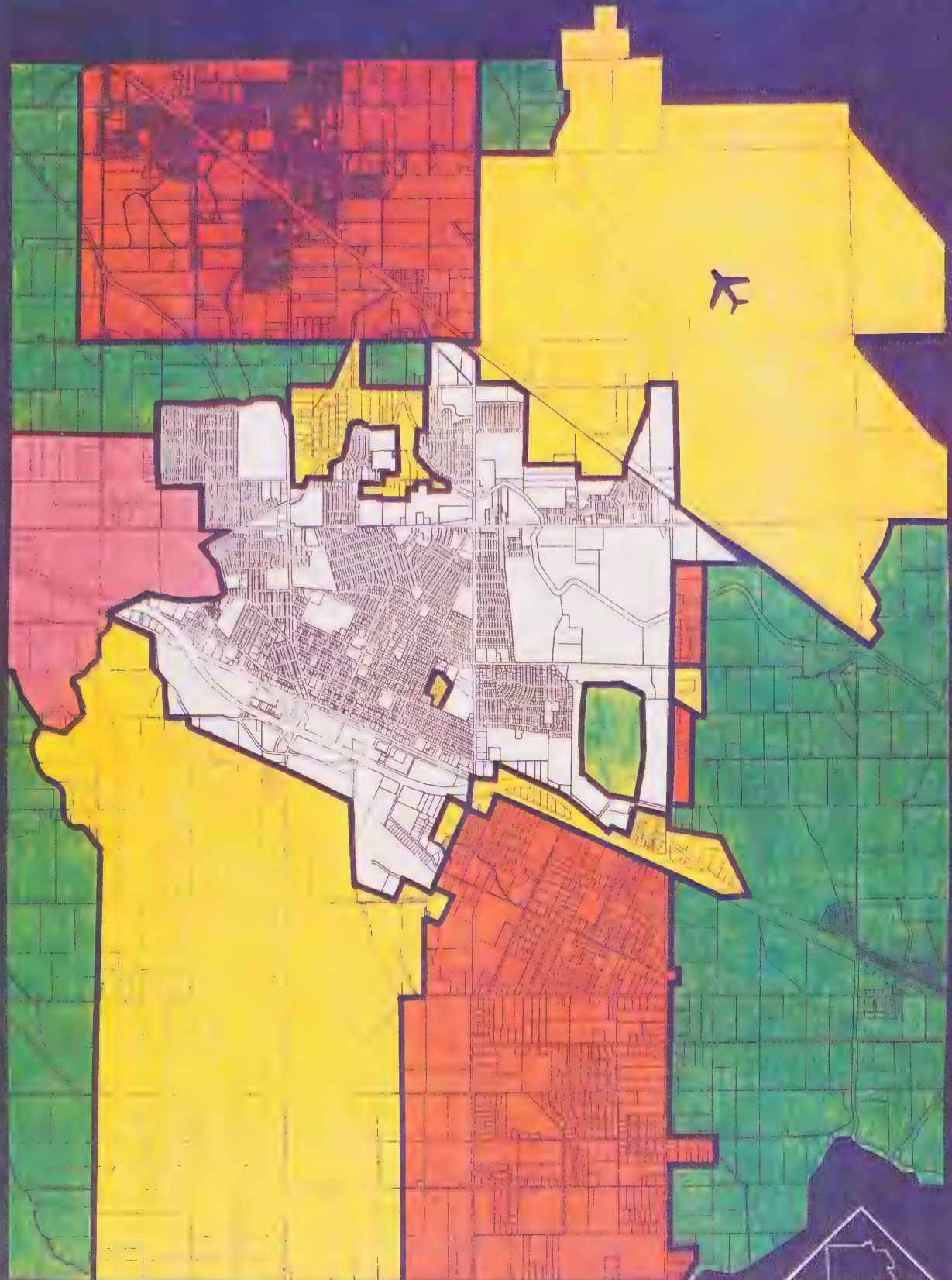
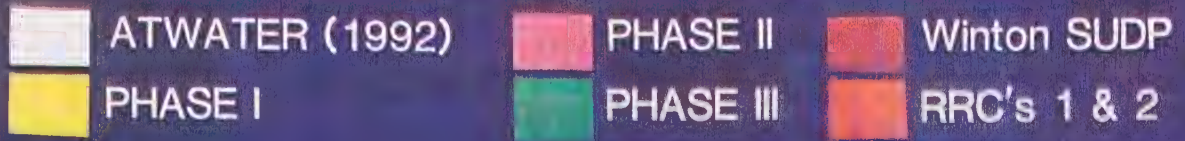




TABLE 7  
PHASED DEVELOPMENT LAND AREAS

<u>GEOGRAPHIC AREA</u>	<u>PERIOD OF URBANIZATION</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT POLICIES</u>
CITY OF ATWATER	present - 2012	- Place priority and provide incentives to urbanize within corporate limits.
PHASE I	1992 - 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City to prepare Plans of Services for Phase I subareas.</li> <li>- City to incorporate Castle AFB into Wastewater Treatment Facility.</li> <li>- City to establish Assessment District fees to facilitate new urbanization south of Hwy 99.</li> </ul>
PHASE II	2002 (or later) - 2012	- City to work with JR Wood and other Area property owners to minimize impact of urbanization upon existing Agricultural Industrial facility.
PHASE III	after 2012	City shall neither provide services nor extend annexation to lands within this area until seventy percent or more of Phase I area is urbanized.
WINTON SUDP / CITY	Development Decisions are external to Atwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City shall work cooperatively with new City of Winton, (vote on incorporation is predicted to be on the November, 1992 ballot).</li> <li>- If incorporation fails, Atwater shall evaluate the feasibility of extending annexation to this area.</li> </ul>
Atwater Rural Residential Centers 1 & 2 (McSwain and Buhach)	Development Decisions for these established urban areas lies with Board of Supervisors	- City shall work cooperatively with residents, extending services when requested by a majority of residents.

Castle AFB, northerly to include some infill above and below the Livingston Canal, at the southeast corner of Juniper and Buhach Road, (to include the new High School site only), southeasterly to facilitate provision of improved services to a area largely urbanized at the present time, and southerly to Hwy 140.

**Phase I** refers to the above described geographic area currently unincorporated. This portion of the proposed Sphere of Influence currently contains the following breakdown of existing and proposed land use:

Total Area

**6525 Acres**

Currently Developed

**3041 Acres**

Currently Undeveloped

**3484 Acres**

Undeveloped Land Proposed for Future Residential Use

**2091 Acres**

Proposed Rural Agricultural	875 Acres	x 2.2 DU/Acre =	1925 units
Proposed Single Family Res.	950 Acres	x 4.5 DU/Ac =	4275 units
Proposed P. D. Residential	198 Acres	x 6.0 DU/Ac =	1188 units
Proposed Multi Family Res.	68 Acres	x 14 DU/Ac =	+ 952 units

---

Total New Dwelling Units = **8340**

Estimated Residents/DU = **x 3.3**

---

**27,522**

The 1992 population in Atwater is 23007 while the projected population for Atwater in 2012, or the horizon year for this General Plan Update, is **51500**.

The residential holding capacity for the Phase I Area equates to 27,522 people. Therefore, the complete urbanization of Phase I per the land use proposed as part of this document, should provide adequate land for expansion to accomodate the projected population increase. However, since total buildout rarely occurs due to the preference of certain property owners to retain their property in a non-urban condition, it would appear likely that there will be justification to expand into the Phase II Area sometime between 2002 and 2007.

# ***APPENDIX***



***ATWATER GENERAL PLAN***

---





## CRITICAL ISSUES

*This Report was prepared for consideration by the General Plan Advisory Committee during the Spring, 1991. The issues identified received were debated by those participating in the process of updating this General Plan.*



### INTRODUCTION

California will continue to grow much faster than the nation as a whole. The Golden State, because of its material and human resources, geographic position, climate, and, perhaps, "mystique," is projected by the State Department of Finance to gain between 3 and 4 million people within the next ten years.

Our San Joaquin Valley region will grow at a rate even faster than the State as a whole. The Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) predicts that this county alone will increase by about 70,000 residents within the next nine years. That's equivalent to three new cities the size of Atwater!

An accelerated growth rate here in the San Joaquin is anticipated due to our relatively low land costs and because of the abundance of flat, undeveloped acreage. The San Francisco Bay Area, with more than five million inhabitants, has all but run out of easily

developable land. The scant remaining acreage costs astronomically more than land here. During the last decade, the Modesto region, just 30 miles to the north, underwent a growth rate significantly higher than Merced County. Housing costs for comparable units indicate that dwellings in Stanislaus County are about 25 percent higher than here. It is expected that the desire for home ownership will bring increasing numbers of residents to Atwater.

In 1938, Atwater adopted its first Zoning Ordinance. In 1968, the City adopted a General Plan, which was updated in 1982. While the 1982 General Plan was intended to serve the community's needs for 20 years, it became apparent by 1990 that the General Plan's Future Land Use Element was about to be built out.

Thus, in October, 1990, the City Council appointed a 38 member General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) to assist the Staff and consultants in the formulation of a new General Plan.



The discussions held at GPAC meetings, input from the City's Technical Advisors, as well as research undertaken to date have revealed certain concerns which will significantly affect the new General Plan's likelihood of success.

The most dynamic plan in the world is worthless if external entities render it non-implementable.

It is important, at this juncture of the General Plan formulation process, to identify those issues believed to be critical to Atwater's future. The list of issues is not intended to be complete. Further, it is not intended that the City Council respond now with policy statements addressing each issue.

Presenting these issues to the City Council and Planning Commission at this time should serve the following purposes:

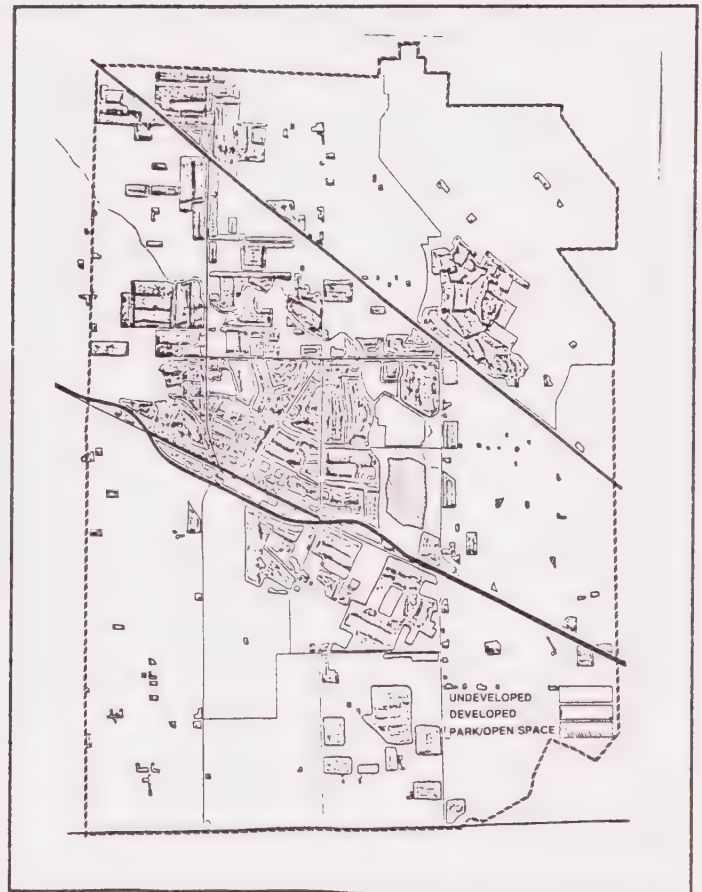
- 1) Acknowledgement that a concern either does or does not exist;
- 2) Opportunity to discuss policy options and/or strategies available to the City of Atwater; and,
- 3) The generation of additional issues which may stimulate the identification of new solutions.



The Atwater Urban Expansion Area, pictured below, was approved by the General Plan Advisory Committee following three months of review. This 31 square mile area, which includes the unincorporated communities of Winton and McSwain, is presently about 45 percent developed.

PRIMARY ASSUMPTION: That the Atwater Urban Expansion Area will be built out (more than 90 percent developed) within the next 25 years.

#### ATWATER URBAN EXPANSION AREA



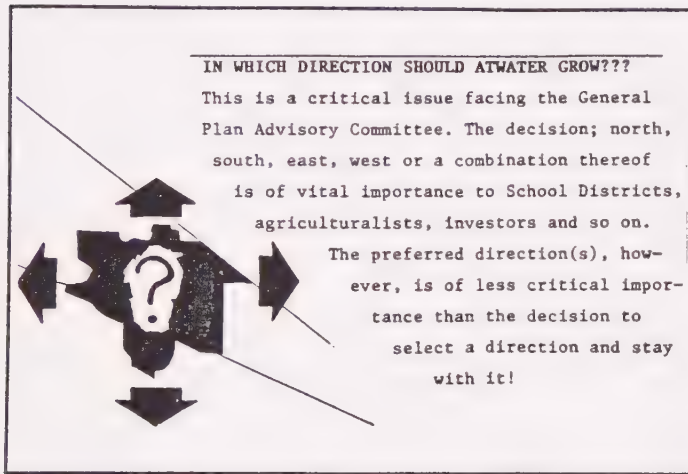
Following are those issues which are believed to be critical to the development of a successful General Plan:



## CRITICAL ISSUES: (Not in order of priority)

### CRITICAL ISSUE #1 - DIRECTION OF FUTURE GROWTH

BACKGROUND: By 1990, more than 95 percent of the City is either developed or committed to development. There are "constraints" to urban expansion on all sides of the City.



Following are the constraints to development for each direction:

#### NORTH

- \* Castle AFB noise
- \* Loss of buffer between Atwater and Winton
- \* Small parcels - difficult to develop
- \* Canals inhibit circulation

#### SOUTH

- \* Freeway and railroad barriers
- \* Need pumping station for sewage
- \* Opposition from McSwain residents
- \* Cost for widening freeway overcrossing

#### EAST

- \* 100 Year flood plain
- \* Small parcels
- \* Castle AFB noise
- \* Cost for new freeway interchange
- \* Resident opposition
- \* Lack of sufficient large land parcels for sale

#### WEST

- \* Some pumping for sewage
- \* J.R. Wood fruit processing plant
- \* Cost for new freeway interchange
- \* Lacks sufficient large land parcels for sale

#### Policy Options

- 1) Direct and encourage new growth toward the South in order to maximize economies of scale.
- 2) Permit new growth to expand in accordance with the "market place" (all directions).

### CRITICAL ISSUE #2 RETENTION OF OLD ATWATER CHARACTER

BACKGROUND: One of the City's greatest attributes is the enhanced character of the older developed neighborhoods. While many cities are talking about developing a "village" character, we should recognize that we already have the attributes of a village.



The older portions of Atwater should be allowed to refurbish themselves through private redevelopment. Further, in some circumstances, multi-family residences should be permitted to replace older single family homes.

However, in no case should the charm and character of Old Atwater be jeopardized by new multi-family homes placed insensitively to their surroundings. The recently constructed apartments in the photo below were built with a concrete parking lot where front lawns existed.



The second phase of Atwater's employment base has been dominated by the United States Air Force. While the decision to close Castle AFB by 1995 may be amended, the City must extend every resource available to identify and promote new employment opportunities.

#### Policy Options:

- 1) Amend Future Land Use Map to prohibit multi-family construction within blocks where the predominant users are single family dwellings.
- 2) Permit multi-family construction within residential/transitional zones, subject to design review standards (i.e., majority of front yard shall be landscaped).

### **CRITICAL ISSUE #3** **ATWATER'S FUTURE EMPLOYMENT BASE**

The predominant industry in Atwater at the time of incorporation was centered on agriculture. The Atwater Cannery, pictured above, still employs hundreds of seasonal workers during the prime tomato and bean canning season.



It is not yet clear what form of employment will emerge as predominant during the City's third economic era. In the future, the City may wish to embark upon a policy which would promote a diversified economic base.



#### Policy Options:

- 1) Target and promote specific types of employment for Atwater, (i.e., non-polluting, labor intensive, with job training and skill advancement opportunities).
- 2) Regulate future housing construction to ensure a balance of jobs-to-housing.

#### **CRITICAL ISSUE #4** **CASTLE AIR FORCE BASE**

At the time of writing this report, a final decision has been made to close Castle AFB by 1995.

Last November, 1990, Colonel Ben Alford addressed the members of GPAC. His advice was to prepare a General Plan without a Castle AFB. Therefore, it would be entirely erroneous to presume that a Plan which identifies a redeployment of Castle AFB jeopardizes the excellent, long-standing City of Atwater/Castle Air Force Base relationship.

#### Policy Options:

- 1) Annex Castle AFB.
- 2) Identify alternative financing methods to provide water and sewer to Castle AFB in order to minimize the fiscal impact to either the U.S. Department of Defense or the City of Atwater.
- 3) Establish a City/Base Commission assigned to investigate the ultimate disposition of Base Housing.
- 4) Establish a City/Base Commission assigned to prepare a Base Redeployment Plan.

#### **CRITICAL ISSUE #5** **COUNTY LAND USE POLICIES**

Last November, 1991, the County Board of Supervisors amended the County's General Plan to permit residential subdivisions containing

three dwelling units (DU) to the acre if a "package" sewage treatment plant were built. This action is contrary to sound planning principles and practices for the following reasons:

- a) Three (3) DU/Acre is an urban land use. (For example, Atwater's R-1-6 zone yields approximately 4.5 DU/Acre). Such developments will place people in subdivisions without adequate services, (i.e. police, fire, sidewalks, storm drainage, parks, recreation programs, etc.).
- b) To further compound the issue of placing people in urban developments without urban services, this policy promises to undermine the ability to reasonably "phase" commercial services, schools, and so on, because these developments are prone to be random.
- c) Three units to the acre is not only an inefficient and wasteful use of land, it impedes viable prime agricultural activities and also impedes the ability of municipal corporations to reasonably plan logical expansions of their water and sewer systems.

#### Policy Options:

- 1) Request that the Board of Supervisors reevaluate their decision to permit urban subdivisions in unincorporated portions of the County. Request that a comprehensive, unbiased study be conducted which identifies the impacts that outstep urban subdivisions will have on all residents of Merced County in general, and the future residents dependent on package plants in particular.
- 2) Legally challenge each unincorporated urban subdivision proposed within the City's Urban Expansion Area.
- 3) Solicit from other members of MCAG (Merced County Association of Governments) to direct the MCAG Staff



to prepare indepth environmental impact analysis and economic analysis studies which will evaluate the impacts that package plants will have on this County.

### **CRITICAL ISSUE #6** **WINTON**

The unincorporated community of Winton lies only two miles north of the Atwater Civic Center. Winton residents are tied to Atwater by a common high school, economics, many organizational structures, and even the same "Atwater" phone directory.

However, there exists a strong sense of community identity and pride within Winton which must be acknowledged by Atwater's leadership in order to effectively promote the best common interests of citizens from both communities.



There are three future scenarios for Winton:

- a) Annexation to Atwater;
- b) Incorporation;
- c) Continued existence as an unincorporated place.

Either alternative "a" or alternative "b" are viable choices. Remaining unincorporated, alternative "c," is not in the best interest of either Winton or Atwater residents.

#### **Policy Options:**

- 1) Cooperate with Winton community leaders to participate in a study which objectively evaluates the economic pros and cons of both annexation of Winton to Atwater and incorporation of Winton.
- 2) Establish an Atwater-Winton Coordinating Committee which works toward improved communication between the two communities and evaluates opportunities such as contract Atwater police services, regional park needs, etc.

### **CRITICAL ISSUE #7** **McSWAIN AREA**

This unincorporated area, named for its elementary school, is immediately south of the City of Atwater and lies between Buhach Road and Quinley Avenue. The area is identified by the County of Merced as a "Rural Residential Center."





This area is neither "rural" nor can it be considered a "center" of anything. McSwain contains three square miles, making it about three-quarters the size of the entire City of Atwater.

homes typically built on one acre lots. During the incremental building process, and still today, McSwain offers an "illusion" of true country living among the almond orchards.

In reality, McSwain will build out as an urbanized place without sidewalks, parks, storm drainage, adequate police, or adequate fire protection. McSwain's "build out" may mean the breakdown of the individual wells and septic systems now utilized by each residence.

#### Policy Options:

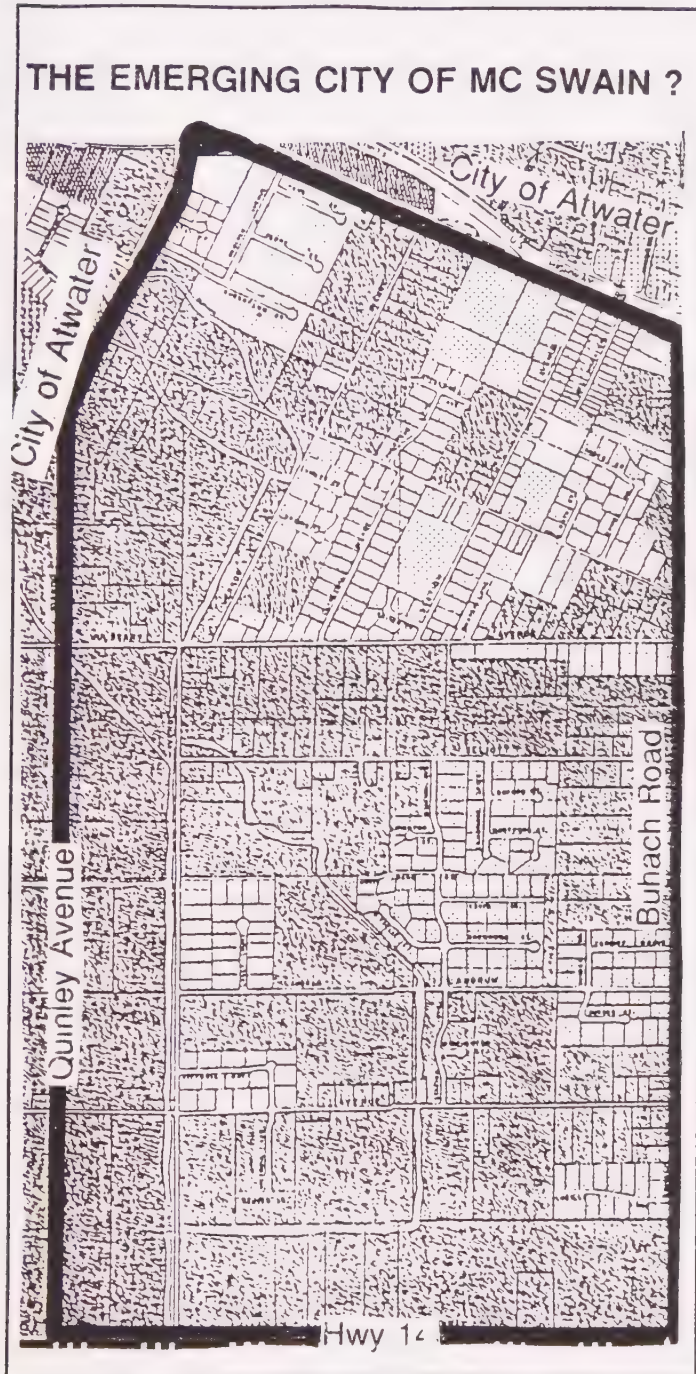
- 1) Evaluate the interrelationship between McSwain and the City of Atwater and identify areas of mutual benefit between the City of Atwater and McSwain (i.e., long-range plan for providing water and sewer services).
- 2) Establish a joint City of Atwater/McSwain Area Commission, which will identify areas of common interest between the two entities.

### **CRITICAL ISSUE #8**

#### **IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE A FOCAL POINT**

Where is the "Center" of Atwater? Is it Downtown? The Civic Center? The Lucky Shopping Center? or Atwater Village Shopping Center?

To the members of GPAC, "Center" means much more than a geographic location. By "Center," we mean a place where people in the community may go for multiple purposes. It may include one predominate activity location where one may: (a) Have lunch; (b) have a watch repaired; (c) buy groceries; (d) see their dentist; or (e) just people watch. It might include passive recreation (a bocce court?), as well as a plaza (complete with ice cream vendors and a juggler) where, above everywhere else in the City, the likelihood of meeting a friend or acquaintance is greatest.



What has been emerging over the past twenty years will culminate with one huge residential subdivision all grown together, containing big





At present, activities are dispersed throughout Atwater, requiring the use of an automobile to transport us from one activity to the next.



#### Policy Options:

- 1) Provide incentive zoning to provide a mixed use district within Atwater.
- 2) Identify a center for Atwater and concentrate multi-use activities within that area.

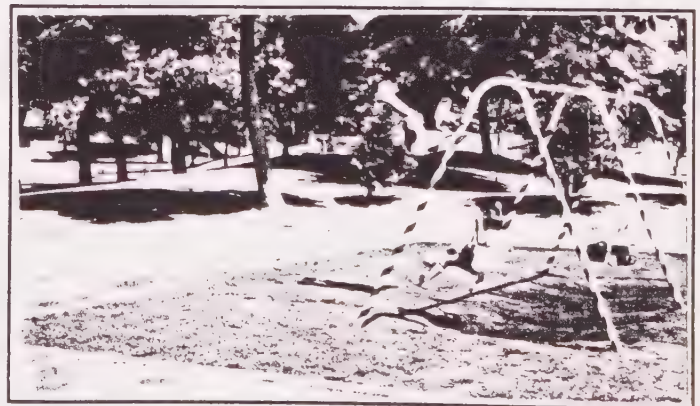
## **CRITICAL ISSUE #9** **COMMITMENT TO A VISION FOR ATWATER**

Too often, we allow immediate, short-term problems to cause us to compromise our long-term objectives for the Community. For example, should the Castle AFB closure news cause the City to lower its present development standards? To what extent should the "market place" influence the City's future planning and zoning decisions?

Naturally, market forces are a very real factor in a City's community development expectations. Beverly Hills, quite frankly, will be more likely to insist upon (and get) a more qualitative development than Daly City. However, it is important that Atwater never lose site of the big picture..."How does each development proposal contribute to Atwater's future?" Is there a substantive benefit to present or future residents? If the project is an eyesore the day an occupancy permit is issued, then the City would have been better off without it.

#### Policy Options:

- 1) Adopt a General Plan which clearly identifies those objectives which will enhance the quality of life for all Atwater citizens.
- 2) Adopt a General Plan which clearly articulates how to obtain those objectives which will enhance the quality of life for all Atwater citizens.





# ATWATER GENERAL PLAN ESTIMATED TRAFFIC VOLUMES

## [ See Below for Map of Locations and Explanation of Scenarios ]

REFER TO FIGURE A

MAP NO#	LOCATION	1990	1990	2000	2000	2000	2010	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
		OBSERVED ADT	MODEL SCENARIO 1	MODEL SCENARIO 2	MODEL SCENARIO 3	MODEL SCENARIO 4	MODEL SCENARIO 5	MODEL SCENARIO 6	MODEL SCENARIO 7	MODEL SCENARIO 8	MODEL SCENARIO 9	MODEL SCENARIO 10
1	WALNUT - BET. CENTRAL + VINE	3946	3420	4053	1115	3221	2545	479	3375	5136	3780	5400
2	WALLACE RD. - BET. SANTE FE + CASTLE AFB	1053	847	1543	1263	1316	2023	439	1200	1686	1475	1728
3	SANTE FE DR. - BET. WINTON WAY + CHESTNUT	9162	10250	17149	16268	16917	22048	19514	16753	22688	18088	26055
4	WINTON WAY - BET. CAMELLIA DR. + GERTRUDE	10399	7452	11783	8146	8072	17408	13927	8751	13029	8710	12523
5	BELLEVUE RD - BET. WINTON + 7TH	14309	10717	11177	17549	16806	22008	17498	9877	13186	10176	14337
6	SHAFFER RD - BET. BELLEVUE + FRUITLAND	8014	5658	13002	11155	11184	10472	11478	10920	16310	11263	20721
7	BELLEVUE RD - BET. SHAFFER RD. + BROWELL	16414	15568	18573	25618	25320	31852	29735	22127	20600	22052	32427
8	SHAFFER RD - BET. KIM + BELLEVUE	8989	9410	18145	10339	10402	12090	19915	10822	15497	12398	16691
9	BELLEVUE RD - BET. CASTLE DR. + BUHACH	15695	16835	19252	26666	26659	31764	30704	22767	28083	24051	33427
10	BUHACH RD - BET. BELLEVUE + SANTE FE	11080	9954	13224	7345	7471	18481	15278	5230	9616	9362	19913
11	BELLEVUE RD - BET. BUHACH + SANTE FE	10403	10355	12625	23071	22961	31772	28196	21282	27441	19901	32105
12	FIRST ST. - BET. FORTUNA + BELLEVUE	5172	3888	6395	7934	8262	9356	7993	9552	13442	8223	20034
13	WINTON WAY - BET. HEIGHTS AVE. + JUNIPER	16017	14815	22381	17959	17614	22827	21844	21374	27789	21215	26762
14	FIFTH ST. - BET. HEIGHTS + IVY	1597	1547	1958	1366	1380	2269	2423	1533	1986	2286	2248
15	SHAFFER RD - BET. JUNIPER + KADOTA	8119	7117	15504	11132	11170	11962	20184	11509	15306	12975	15417
16	JUNIPER - BET. SIERRA MADRE + BUHACH	5906	5681	9563	1164	1154	12895	11824	981	4255	1141	7526
17	BUHACH RD - BET. N. OF JUNIPER	7812	6731	10387	7545	7558	23883	16206	8185	16008	9561	20519
18	ATWATER BLVD. - BET. APPLGATE + VISTA	10091	9933	15488	724	682	2563	2630	2058	2385	2325	2988
19	APPLGATE RD - N. OF ATWATER-JORDON	3292	2893	11797	15443	15436	22720	22873	13774	26638	13617	23696
20	ATWATER BLVD. - BET. SHAFFER + CALIFORNIA	10417	9055	17244	15520	15495	10851	24224	18292	23736	18160	24563
21	SHAFFER RD - BET. ATWATER BLVD. + BROADWAY	7512	10004	19398	17936	17904	27704	27139	19379	28996	19735	25912
22	BUHACH RD - BET. GREENSANDS + JUNIPER	6115	6317	10449	8009	8022	21718	19857	8870	18524	10172	20989
23	BUHACH RD - N. OF FLEMING RD.	2970	3247	13113	7885	7867	15166	13132	10574	16368	10895	15523
24	APPLGATE RD - N. OF 140	1608	1537	2369	1892	1905	9657	3662	1972	4737	1993	4421
TRAFFIC ADT TOTAL AT KEY LOCATIONS		196092	183231	296572	263044	264778	396034	381154	261157	381522	274354	425925

## SCENARIOS USED IN TABLE ABOVE

### Scenario 2 2000: No Improvements

Scenario 2 assumes that no improvements have been made to the road network. The base 2000 land use data is used to project future travel.

### Scenario 3 2000: Bellevue Rd. Extension

Scenario 3 assumes that Bellevue Rd. is extended as a major arterial west to connect at a new Interchange with Highway 99, at Westside Boulevard. Bellevue Rd. is also extended to the east (to the City of Merced) as a major arterial.

### Scenario 4 2000: Bellevue Extension; Walnut Ave. Improvements

Scenario 4 is similar to Scenario 3 in that the east and west extensions of Bellevue Rd. are assumed to have been constructed. In addition, Walnut Ave is widened from 2 to 4 lanes between the community of Winton and the City of Livingston.

### Scenario 5 2010: Bellevue Extension

Scenario 5 assumes the same road network as scenario 3, with 2010 land use.

### Scenario 6 2010: Bellevue Extension; Castle Parkway

Scenario 6 assumes the east and west Bellevue Rd. extensions as previously mentioned in scenario 3 have been constructed, and also assumes the proposed Castle Parkway.

### Scenario 7 2000: Walnut Ave. Improvements

Scenario 7 assumes the improvements to Walnut Ave. mentioned in Scenario 4 are in place. The eastern and western extensions of Bellevue Rd. are eliminated.

### Scenario 8 2010: Walnut Ave. Improvements

Scenario 8 assumes the same road network as Scenario 7. Scenario 8 was run using 2010 land use data.

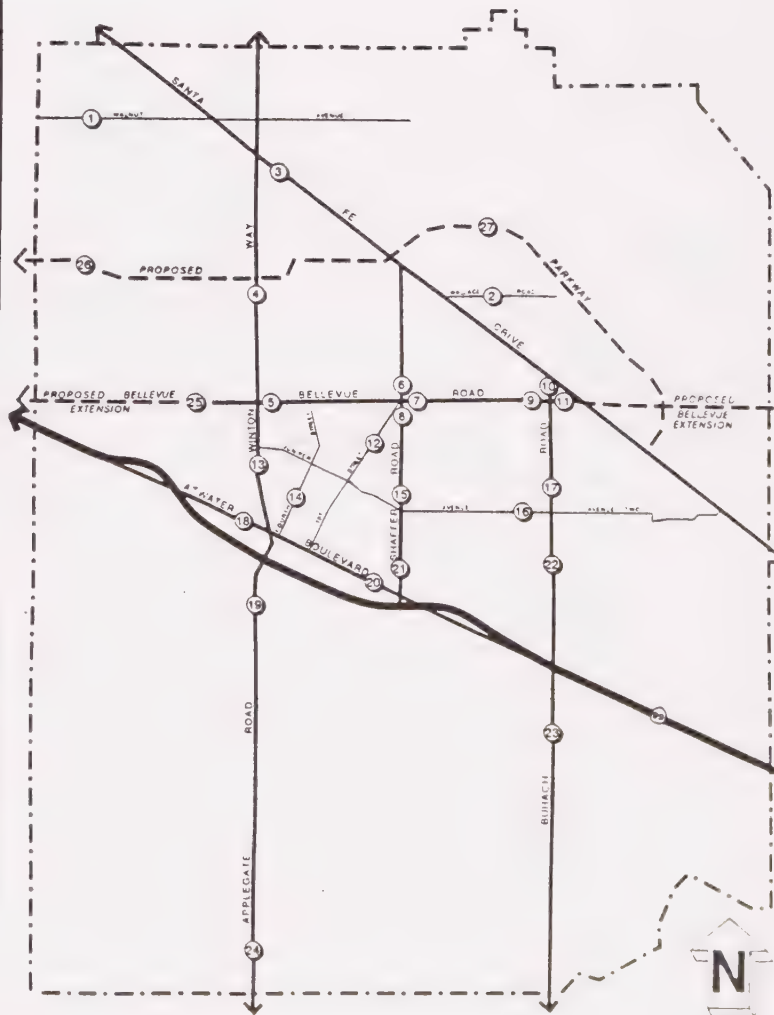
### Scenario 9 2000: Walnut Ave. Improvements; Eastern Bellevue Rd. Extension

Scenario 9 assumes that the extension of Bellevue Rd. east to existing Bellevue Rd. near the City of Merced has been constructed. The western extension of Bellevue is not included.

### Scenario 10 2010: Walnut Ave. Improvements; Eastern Bellevue Rd. Extension

Scenario 10 assumes the same road network as Scenario 9. Scenario 10 was run using 2010 land use data.

## LOCATIONS USED IN TABLE ABOVE



**EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS FOR MERCED COUNTY  
FEBRUARY 1992  
BASED ON CASTLE REPLACEMENT BY 1995**

INDUSTRY	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
AGRICULTURE	11,700	11,700	11,700	11,700	11,700
MINING	13	13	13	13	13
CONSTRUCTION	2,260	3,285	3,905	4,706	5,658
MANUFACTURING	9,675	11,352	13,367	16,098	19,524
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES	1,775	2,688	3,402	4,272	5,340
WHOLESALE TRADE	2,100	2,820	3,352	4,074	4,980
RETAIL TRADE	8,725	12,205	15,362	19,277	24,096
FINANCE, INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE	2,125	2,446	3,006	3,639	4,383
SERVICES	7,050	11,084	13,772	17,264	21,580
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	1,325	1,035	1,186	1,391	1,621
ST/LOCAL GOVERNMENT	10,275	11,661	14,301	16,940	20,475
MILITARY (CASTLE AFB)	5,349	0	0	0	0
CASTLE REPLACEMENT	0	500	3000	4000	5000
<b>TOTAL WAGE &amp; SALARY</b>	<b>62,372</b>	<b>70,789</b>	<b>86,366</b>	<b>103,374</b>	<b>124,370</b>

WAGE & SALARY JOBS	62,372	70,789	86,366	103,374	124,370
OUT-COMMUTERS (11%)	6,861	7,787	9,500	11,371	13,681
<b>WAGE &amp; SALARY JOBS</b>	<b>62,372</b>	<b>70,789</b>	<b>86,366</b>	<b>103,374</b>	<b>124,370</b>
SELF EMPLOYED (9%)	5,613	6,371	7,773	9,304	11,193
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>74,846</b>	<b>84,947</b>	<b>103,639</b>	<b>124,049</b>	<b>149,244</b>

\* SCENARIO #1 WAGE AND SALARY JOBS WAS USED AS A BASE.

\* CASTLE REPLACEMENT FACILITY WILL PROVIDE 500 JOBS IN 1995, 3000 JOBS BY 2000, 4000 BY 2005, AND 5000 JOBS BY 2010.

\* IN ADDITION TO THE REPLACEMENT FACILITY, NON-BASIC WAGE & SALARY JOBS BETWEEN 1995 - 2010 WILL INCREASE BY 640 IN 1995, 3067 IN 2000, 4108 IN 2005 AND 5222 IN 2010. NON-BASIC WAGE & SALARY JOBS INCLUDE CONSTR, TPU, FIRE, RETAIL, SERVICES, FED GOV, AND ST/LOC GOV.

**POPULATION FORECASTS  
FOR  
MERCED COUNTY AND INCORPORATED CITIES**

**ADOPTED FEBRUARY 1992**

	POPULATION BY SPHERE OF INFLUENCE						GROWTH
INCORPORATED CITIES	1990*	1991 DOF	1995	2000	2005	2010	91-2010
ATWATER	22,282	22,798	25,769	35,326	41,678	48,947	4.1%
DOS PALOS	4,196	4,226	6,335	9,059	12,954	18,525	8.1%
GUSTINE	3,931	3,980	7,630	9,538	11,922	14,902	7.2%
LIVINGSTON	7,317	7,780	10,564	14,050	18,687	24,854	6.3%
LOS BANOS	14,519	15,301	19,851	25,330	32,320	41,241	5.4%
MERCED	56,216	57,645	76,797	95,604	114,765	137,590	4.7%
<b>TOTAL INCORPORATED</b>	<b>108,461</b>	<b>111,730</b>	<b>146,946</b>	<b>188,907</b>	<b>232,326</b>	<b>286,059</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
<b>UNINCORPORATED</b>							
SNELLING	325	325	340	360	385	410	1.2%
DELHI	3,315	3,315	3,660	4,041	4,550	5,125	2.3%
HILMAR	2,698	2,698	3,440	4,390	5,875	7,865	5.8%
WINTON	6,405	6,405	6,014	9,559	11,253	11,967	3.3%
BEACHWOOD/FRANKLIN	2,864	2,864	2,056	4,028	4,364	3,765	1.5%
MIDWAY/S. DOS PALOS	1,629	1,629	1,860	2,125	2,490	2,925	3.1%
PLANADA	2,652	2,652	3,610	5,300	7,790	11,445	8.0%
LEGRAND	1,152	1,152	1,570	2,305	3,385	4,970	8.0%
SANTA NELLA	565	565	910	1,465	2,580	4,550	11.6%
MCSWAIN	1904	1904	2,190	2,518	2,896	3,330	3.0%
REMAINDER OF UNINCORPORATE	46,433	48,766	27,774	36,656	28,134	19,665	-4.7%
<b>TOTAL UNINCORPORATED</b>	<b>69,942</b>	<b>72,275</b>	<b>53,424</b>	<b>72,747</b>	<b>73,702</b>	<b>76,017</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>TOTAL COUNTY</b>	<b>178,403</b>	<b>184,005</b>	<b>200,370</b>	<b>261,654</b>	<b>306,028</b>	<b>362,076</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

\* 1990\* POPULATION BY CITY LIMIT, 1990 CENSUS

\* 1991 POPULATION, JANUARY 1991 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

\* POPULATION FIGURES BETWEEN 1995 - 2010 ARE BASED ON SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

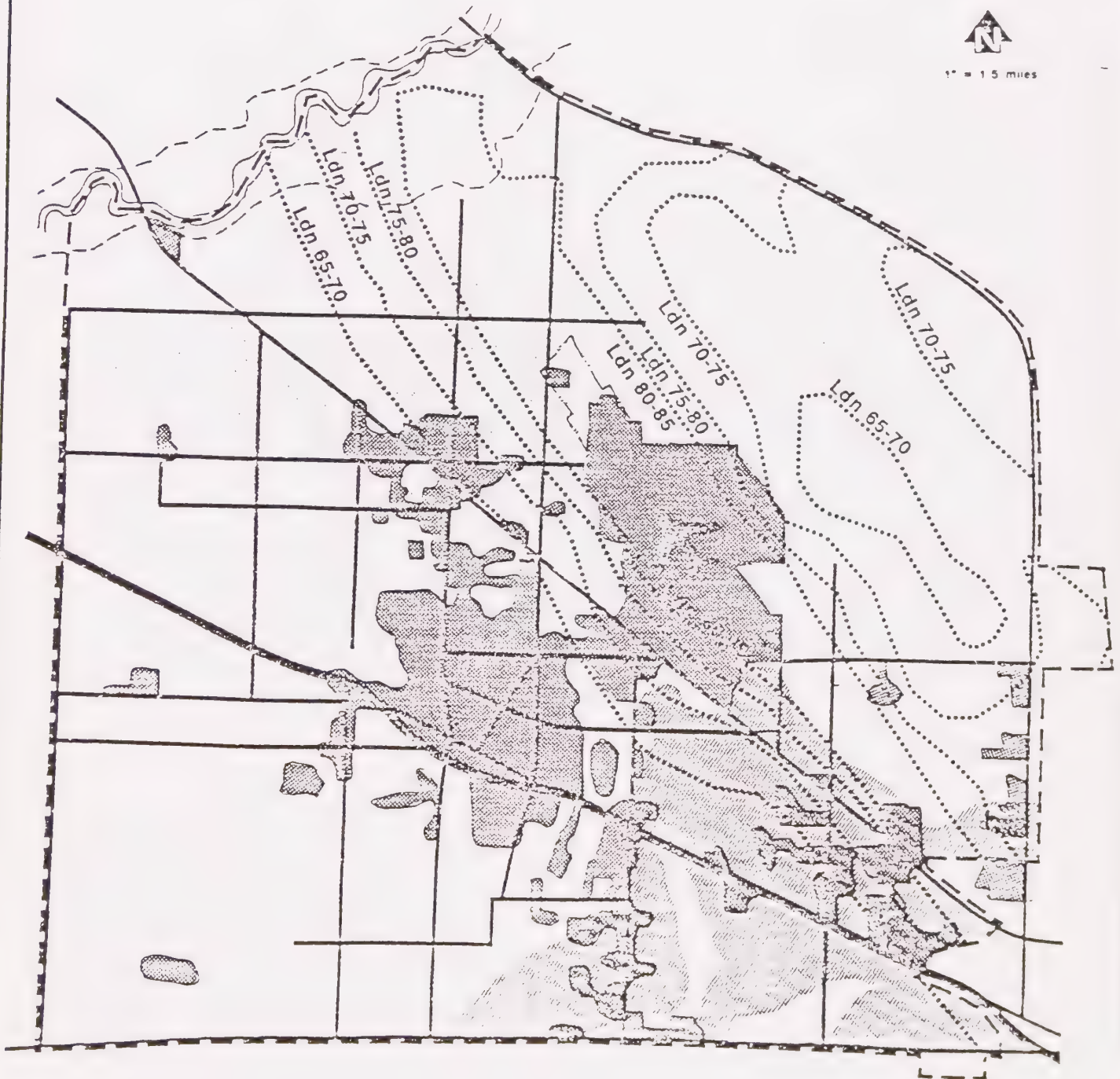


# DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

## LEGEND:

Prime Farmland  
100 Year Flood Plain

Noise Contours  
Developed Land





# SEWER SYSTEM

## LEGEND:



12" AND LARGER SEWER MAIN



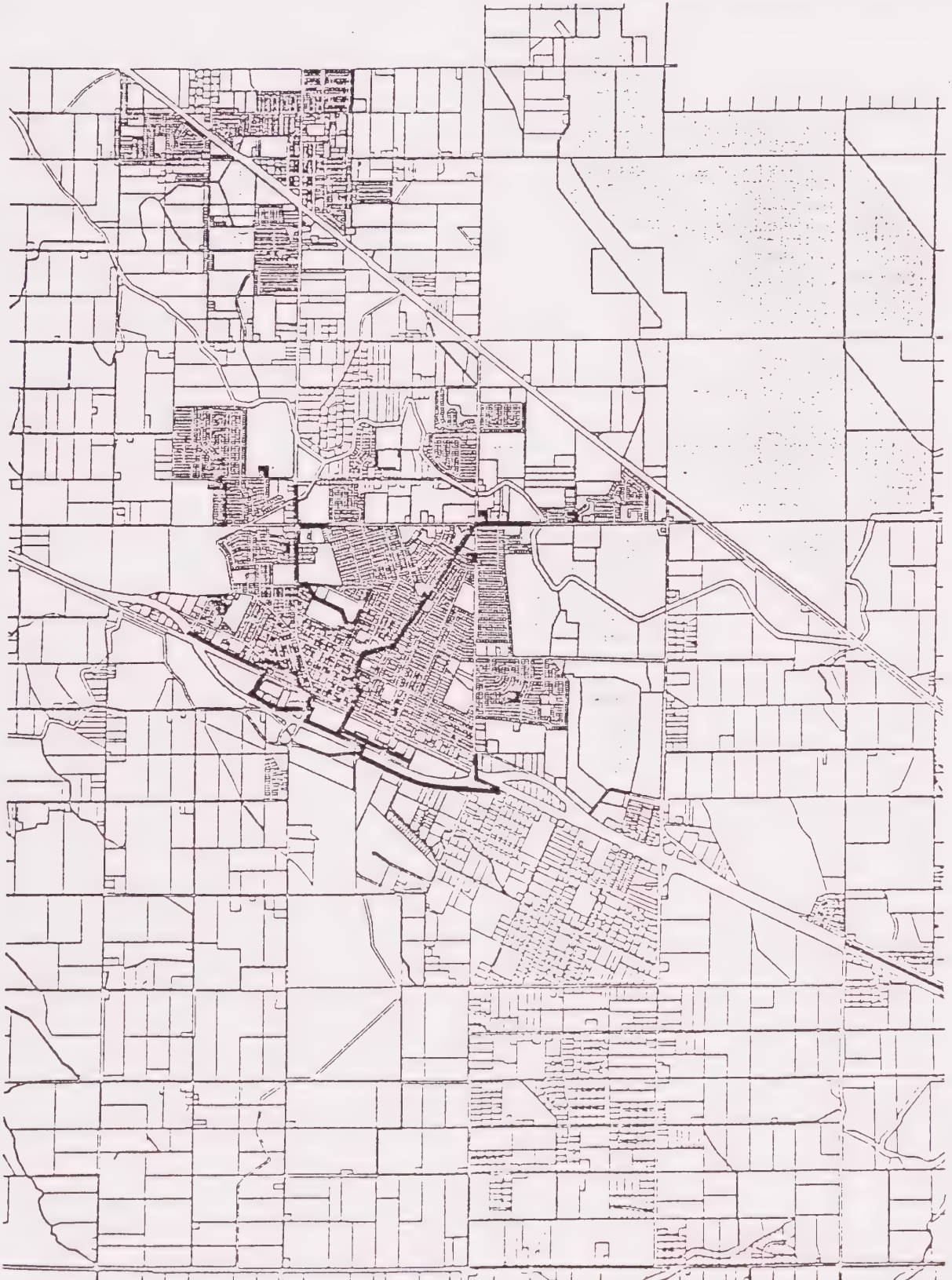
CITY LIMITS AND CASTLE A.F.B.



LIFT STATION

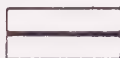


AREA OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS  
ON SEPTIC SYSTEM



# WATER SYSTEM

## LEGEND:



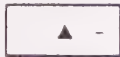
12" AND LARGER WATER MAIN



STORAGE TANK



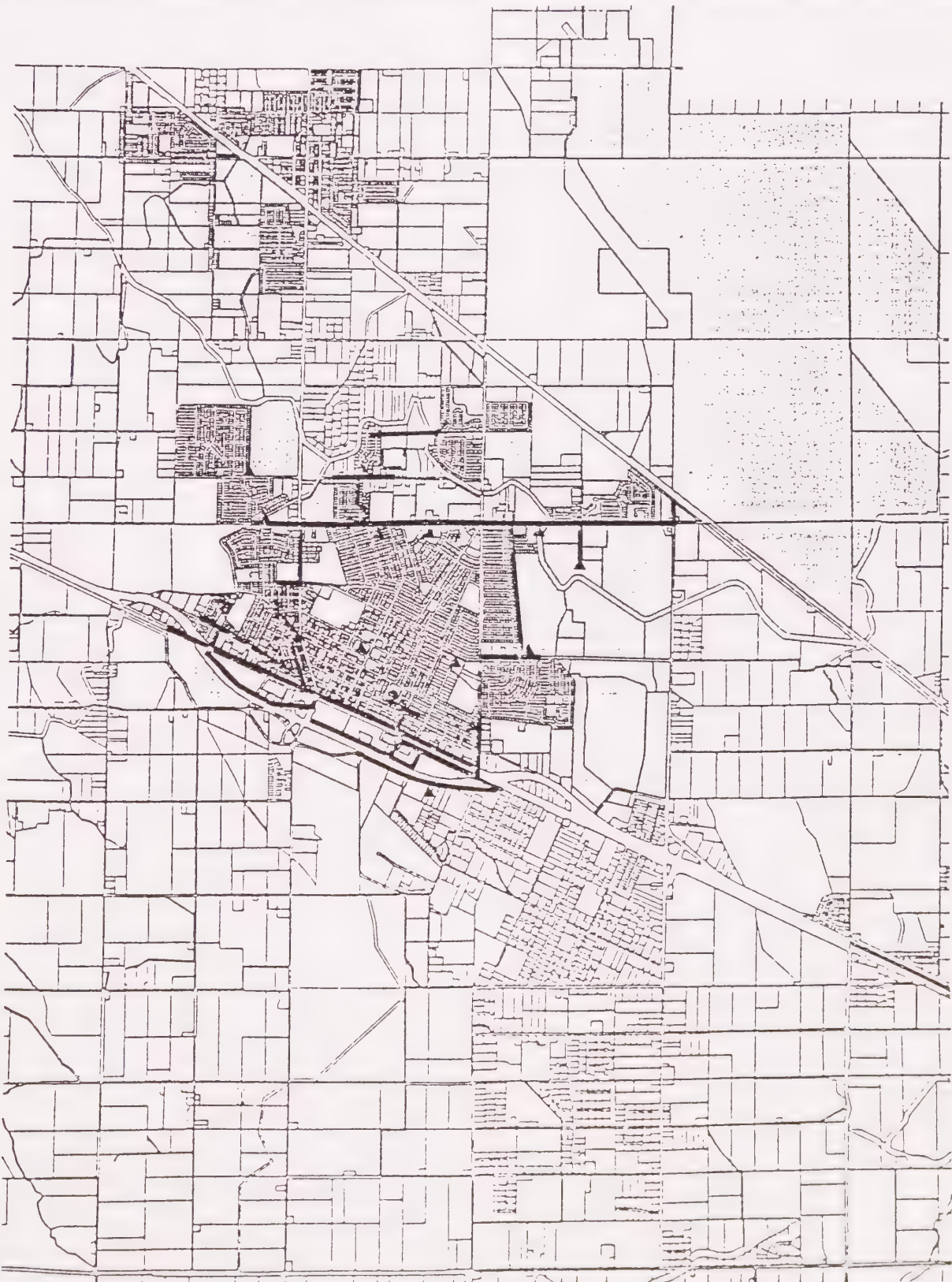
AREA OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS  
ON PRIVATE WELL



WATER WELL



CITY LIMITS AND CASTLE A.F.B.





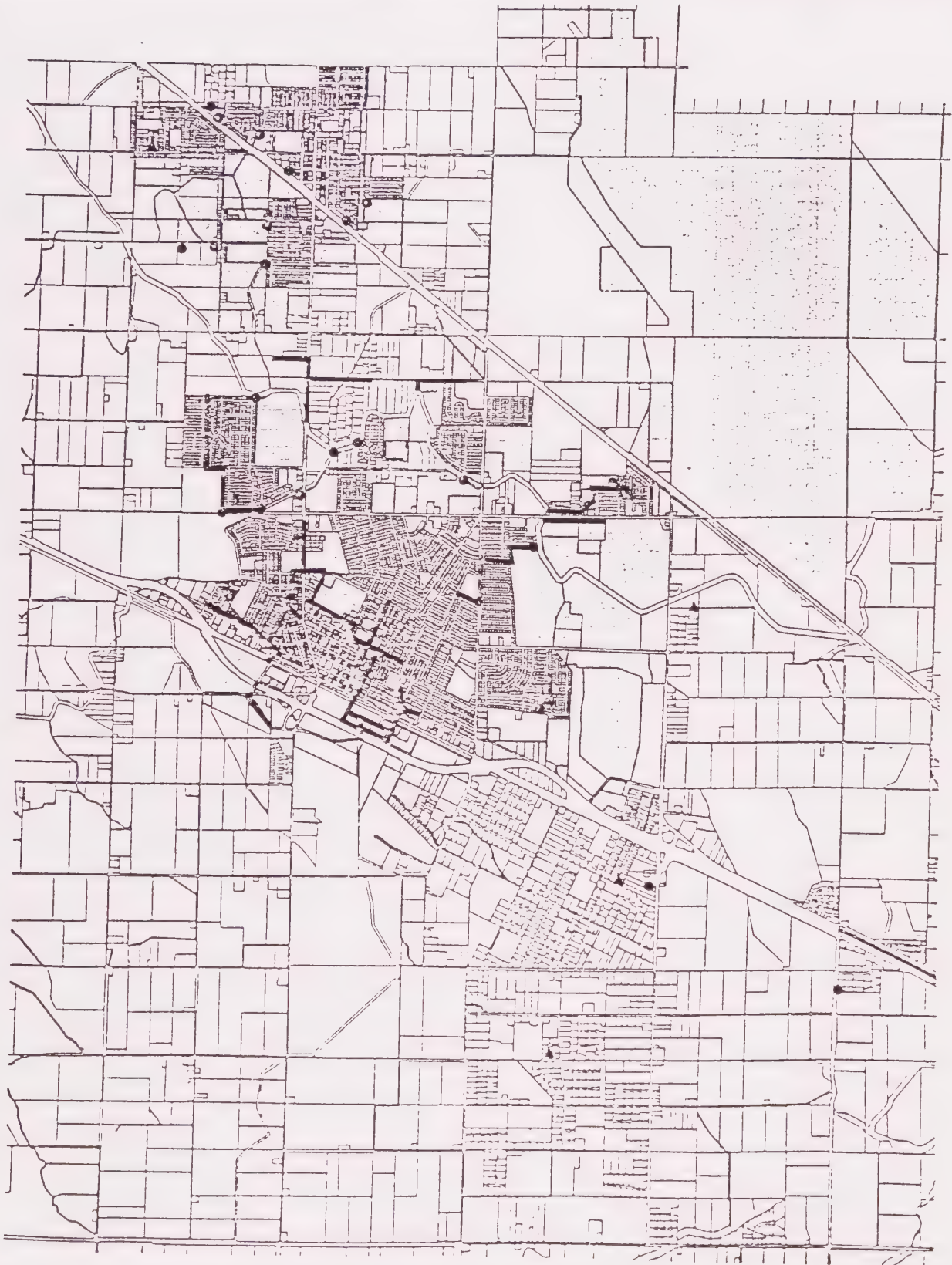
# STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM

## LEGEND:



NOTE: Drainage plans for the area known as the "Atwater Rural Residential Center (RRC)" are developed and approved by the County.

A comprehensive drainage plan south of the city does not presently exist.





# ATWATER CITY

MERCED COUNTY LAFCO

**APPROVED**

Date 23 AUG 1984

*Michael L. Williams*

N

OLIVE AVE.

WINTON

CASTLE

A.F.B.

ATWATER

AREA IN S.U.D.P.  
TO BE EXCLUDED  
FROM SPHERE

WAY

SANTA FE

GERTRUDE AVE.

WINTON

HIGHWAY 99

BLUACH ROAD

DRIVE

GURR ROAD

ATWATER-JORDAN  
ROAD

## SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

### LEGEND



ATWATER CITY LIMITS



AREA WITHIN ATWATER URBAN EXPANSION  
BOUNDARY TO BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE  
SPHERE OF INFLUENCE



SPHERE OF INFLUENCE BOUNDARY

ADOPTED BY LAFCO RESOLUTION 1054 8-23-84



# ADOPTED SCENIC CORRIDORS MAP

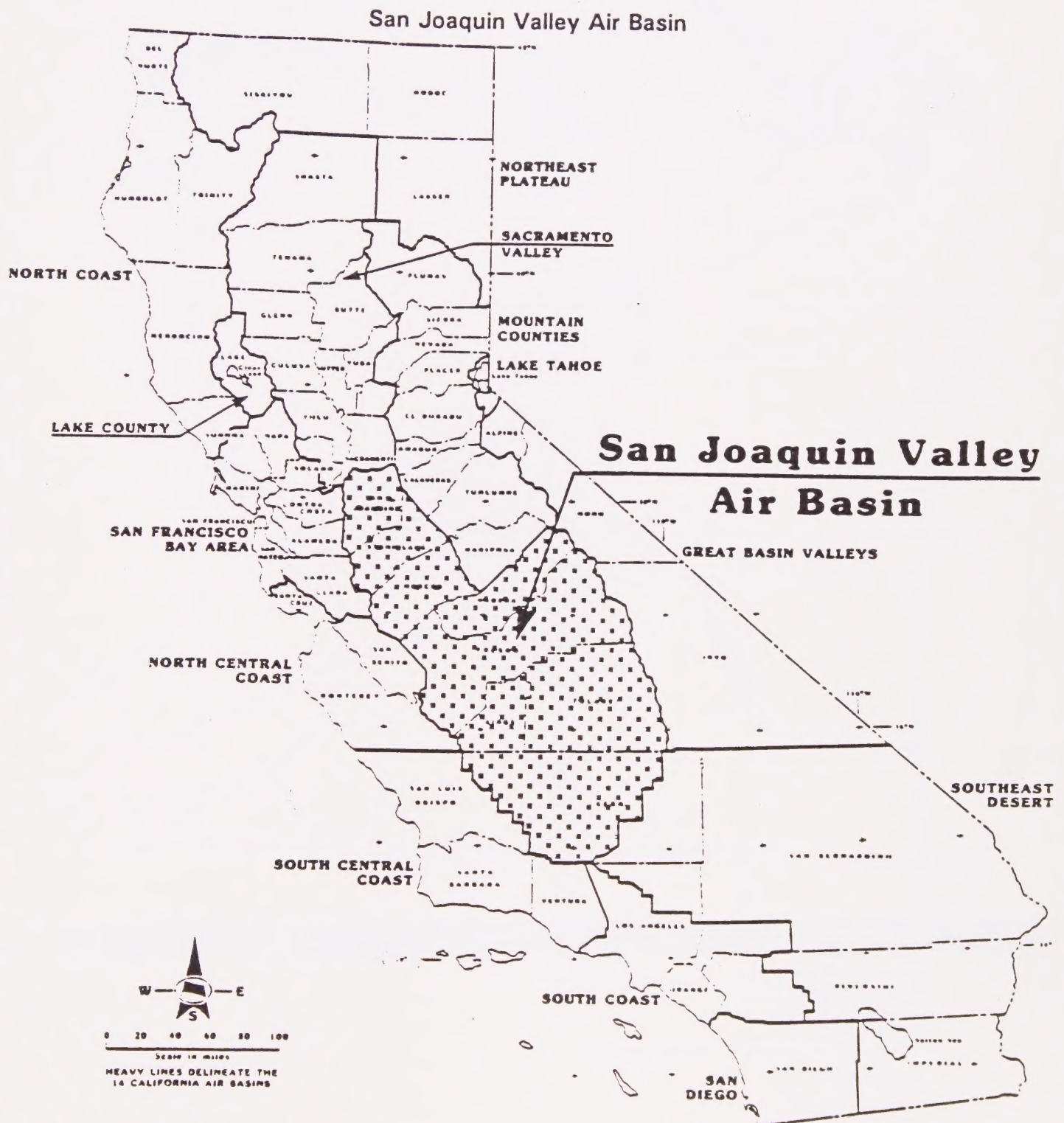
Adopted as part of the 1981 Atwater General Plan

NOTE : Since this document does not address Scenic Highways, this map remains in effect



TO BECOME SCENIC CORRIDOR

---



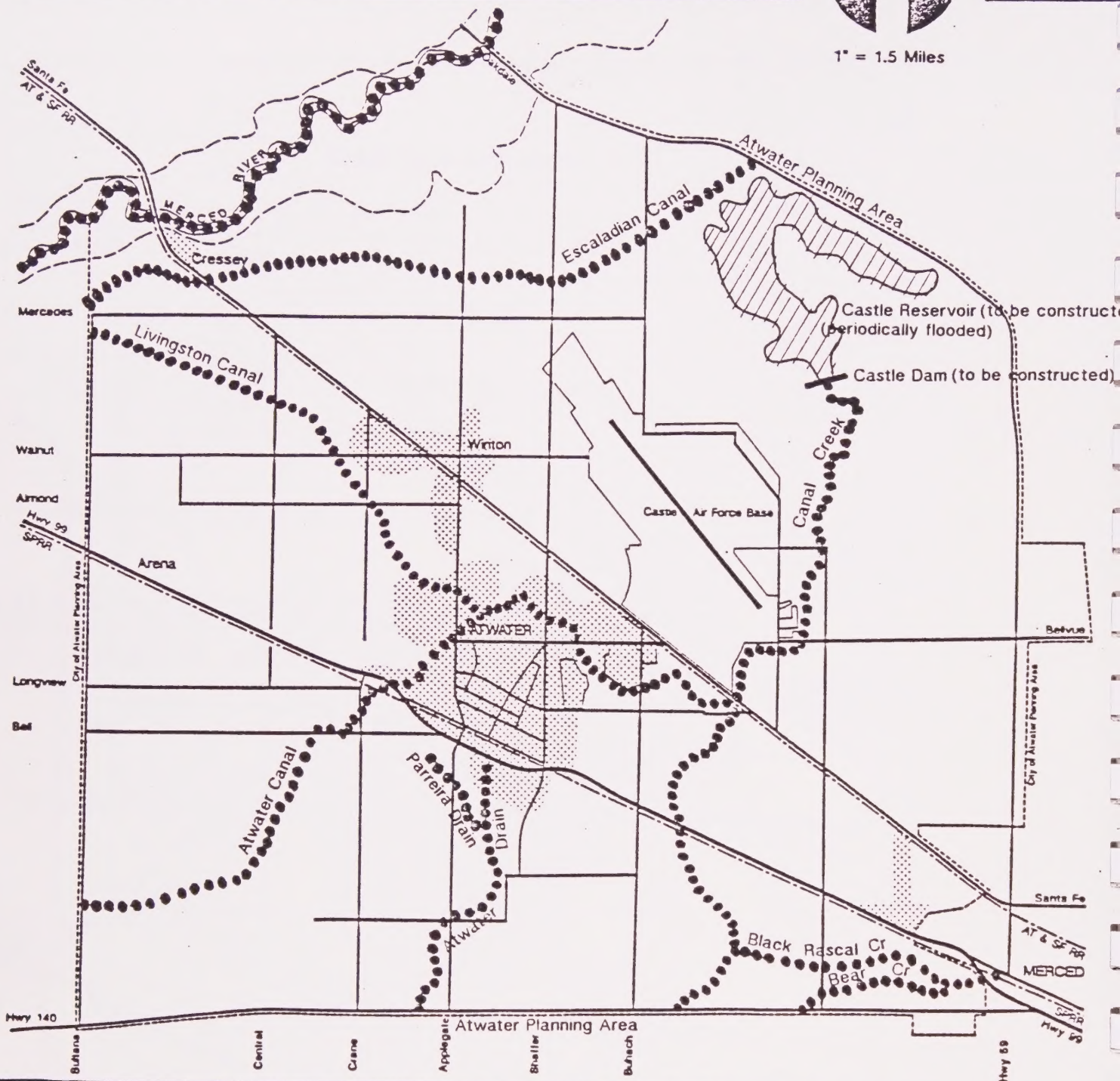


# Atwater Planning Area



1" = 1.5 Miles

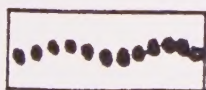
QUA



## Legend



Current Developed Areas



Major Watercourses

## Major Water Features

U.C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES



C124907333

